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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, CRITICALITY AND COLLABORATION: DEVELOPING CRITICAL LITERACY WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR SECONDARY BLACK STUDENTS, by BROOKS J. SALTER, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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Criticality and Collaboration: Developing Critical Literacy Writing Instruction for Secondary Black Students

by

BROOKS J. SALTER

Under the Direction of Nadia Behizadeh

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs and identities of two Black ELA teachers committed to criticality and examine how these beliefs and identities affect perspectives and teaching practices. This study also explored the process through which the two teachers created instructional units of study intended to support the secondary Black student participants deepen their criticality development. Finally, the students' writing was assessed to analyze the curriculum's impact. This study drew upon sociocultural learning theory and critical literacy writing instruction. Critical composition pedagogy was used to design instruction with the intent to help students write for critical social change. This qualitative study also employed case study methodology and critical discourse analysis methods. Findings demonstrate how the teachers' social justice background, cultural experiences, and pedagogical practices supported their efforts to develop critical curriculum. Through the critical discourse analytic tool, additional findings suggest the critical composition pedagogy curriculum increased student participants' exploration of identity, investigation of community concerns, and increased their active involvement in classroom tasks. Implications highlight the importance of students writing for critical social change and the urgency of addressing challenges to critical curriculum such as administrative mandates and legislation that limit the praxis of critical literacy focused teaching and learning.

Criticality and Collaboration: Developing Critical Literacy Writing Instruction for Secondary
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Brooks J. Salter

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

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in

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Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA

2022

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1 INTRODUCTION

My mother said I must always be intolerant of ignorance but understanding of illiteracy. –Maya Angelou

My understanding of literacy and my research interests connect to the quote above. Literacy is inclusive of more than reading and writing (Street, 1995). I am influenced by sociocultural learning theories as I cultivate my idea of literacy, and more specifically, critical literacy and its objective. I look to the work of Freire (2001) and Perry (2012) to inform my definition of critical literacy. As stated by Freire (2001), critical literacy “is a process of consciousness, which means taking the printed word, connecting it to the world, and then using that for purposes of empowerment” (pg. 60). Critical literacy is concerned with reading both the word and the world. Through the teaching of reading and writing, students are empowered to make sense of the world they inhabit and identify their place in the world. As students gain access, literacy instruction should include diverse cultural and social experiences that contribute to what students learn and how they learn. One of NCTE’s (2021) vision statements for the ELA classroom is to deepen every student’s consciousness of worth and widen possibilities for all students’ access, power, agency, affiliation, and impact across a lifetime.

So, how can teachers help facilitate this process? Teachers who explore how various forms of literacy serve as tools for agency and individualized power can help the classroom be a diverse environment where learning is relevant, relatable, and engaging. Within that exploration, teachers can also increase instructional relevancy and engagement by including criticality-based curriculum in their pedagogical practices. However, criticality and instruction that supports writing for critical social change are not the norm for many classrooms inhabited by Black students in underserved communities. Mathias, a student participant in my study, stated, “I’m

bored throughout the day.” Aaliyah, another student participant, stated, “I feel that this school would be better if we had more well thought out lessons.” One goal of this study was to challenge curriculum design and create opportunities for students like Mathias and Aaliyah to find relevance in their literacy skill acquisition. To increase relevance, Black high school students in this study used critical literacy to explore their own cultural experiences. Another goal of this study was to explore the identities of my teacher collaborator, Ms. G, and me. Through this exploration, I discovered our spiritual connection as two people who identify as Christians, our similar upbringing with parents who are teachers, and our commitment to social justice-based instruction that celebrates the rich cultural backgrounds of our predominately Black students. An additional goal of this study was to work with my teacher collaborator to create instructional units of study that emphasized criticality development through the lens of critical literacy with a focus on writing for critical social change.

Opportunities for students to write for critical social change are substantially missing in the curriculum and instructional plans within the US. Also, the documentation and process of teacher collaboration for criticality are limited in the literacy research I reviewed. Additionally, the efforts of teachers of color and their collaborative work to enact criticality in the classroom was not abundant in my literary research. Along with two other scholars (Behizadeh, Salter, & Thompson-Smith, 2021), we explored research on writing instruction with elementary and secondary school aged children (K-12) to examine how educators structure writing for impact, including if students are writing for social change, and the effects on students of including this element. We found several instances of students writing with a focus in critical literacy. However, there were limited occurrences of students being encouraged to address systems and people in power outside of the classroom to advocate for positive change. Critical pedagogy and

critical literacy-based writing opportunities are needed in the classroom to enhance students' learning experience and to help students understand their voices are powerful and needed.

My qualitative study examined the design process and impact of critical literacy writing initiatives for underserved Black high school students. I define underserved through two specific lenses. The student participants in my study live in a low socio-economic community and contend with limited access to resources and services (Berliner, 2009). This limited access impacts their overall well-being and identity in and out of school. I also define underserved by the absence of consistent opportunities for Black high school students to engage in critical literacy-based instruction and critical pedagogy-based curriculum. In my research, (Behizadeh, Salter, & Thompson-Smith, 2021) we address this void in teaching and learning, and cite various research, such as Powell et al.'s (2001) study, that present inquiry into active critical pedagogy and critical literacy that impacts students' identity and criticality development. I posit that many Black high school students are underserved in their educational experience, and they are not exposed to curriculum content that supports criticality development in and outside of learning spaces. Kirkland (2004) states, "Writing pedagogies are extremely influential to how one acts, thinks, believes, and behaves," (p. 5). I argue that underserved Black high school students who are offered more opportunities to engage in relevant and relative critical literacy writing initiatives experience greater motivation and fulfillment in school, and they are positioned to use their voices to enact positive change in their communities and society.

Teachers have the power to recognize and support the strengths and abilities of their students. However, a deficit perspective has often been placed on Black students and their representation in school, but Black students have a wealth of knowledge that can enrich the classroom environment. Williams et al. (2020) explore Yosso's (2005) "community cultural

wealth” ideology and state, “the idea that Black communities are ripe with cultural wealth, works to reject the idea that Black students come from cultures of deficiency or are sites of deficiency themselves, by focusing on how they come from communities abundant in assets,” (p. 256).

Yosso defines community cultural wealth as “an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and microforms of oppression,” (p. 77). It is important that schools work to highlight the cultural wealth of Black students through instructional practices and daily treatment. Schools that subscribe to the “community cultural wealth” ideology are conduits that help students and stakeholders push against systemic oppression in and out of school. Community cultural wealth and its infusion in the classroom also strengthens criticality development. Teachers who consistently highlight this community cultural wealth help their Black students feel appreciated and acknowledged, and in turn our Black students are propelled to speak out against cycles of oppression and hegemony that stifle their voices and agency.

My study involved the co-construction of critical literacy writing instruction with one English teacher as we collaborated to support students write for critical social change. Through a focused emphasis on teachers, instruction, and student writing, the study was fueled by a desire to enact change within the curriculum choices and instructional practices of English teachers through the process of collaboration. Several components such as students analyzing their identity and development (Burtch, 2018; Hall, 2017), and exploring issues that concern them (Pandya et al., 2015), guide this study. Also, within this study Black high school students were encouraged to examine the pervasive inequities in their communities, neighborhoods, and society at large. Subsequently, the student participants were motivated to speak against the inequities they have observed and engaged in writing that addressed individuals in power to provoke

positive change (Christensen, 2017; Janks, 2013). The culminating activity in the study involved my teacher collaborator and I working with the students to compose and submit an emailed letter to the mayor of their city. Before we completed this task and praxis attempt, the student participants used their laptop devices to research the background and access contact information for their city's mayor and her city council members. It was important for the students to activate some level of digital competency (Koonce, 2017; Nelson, 2018) as they communicate with people in power to advocate for critical social change.

Three questions guided the research inquiry in this study: What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction? What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum? How are Black high school students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change? The first question reflects the focus area of the identity and background of my teacher collaborator and me. The second question reflects the instructional planning and design process for the study's curriculum, and the third question reflects the impact of the curriculum through analysis of the students' writing. I employed Morrell's (2004) Critical Composition Pedagogy (CCP) framework and Fairclough's (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology to structure and analyze students' writing. Morrell's CCP framework was useful as we incorporated key components such as cultural background and communication into the creation of the curriculum. I used Fairclough's specific CDA analysis tool because it allowed me to explore the textual, processing, and social elements of the students' writing and responses. Through this methodology, I interpreted students' writing, explored their commentary in conjunction with the context of time, and

examined how their words and expressions highlighted their views on societal issues such as racism and discrimination.

Purpose of Study

The first purpose of my study was to explore the beliefs and identities of two Black teachers committed to criticality and examine how these beliefs and identities affect perspectives and teaching practices. Second, I sought to explore the process through which two ELA teachers created instructional units of study intended to help students deepen their criticality development. This instruction was rooted in a critical research goal that focused on Black high school students writing about their lived experiences and the issues that concern them, learning about societal problems such as racism, and being equipped to write for critical social change. Finally, I analyzed students' writing to assess the impact of the curriculum on students. My study's purpose contributes to necessary research that supports and affirms the voices of Black high school students who are far too often silenced in both education and society. Subsequently, teaching and learning has been adversely impacted by legislation that also wants to limit criticality in today's educational environment. My study challenges these suppressive tactics and addresses the need for continued criticality in current day curriculum.

Significance of Study

Legislation and education reform are actively working to alter instruction on pertinent social issues. The state of Georgia recently passed HB 1084. This law prohibits instruction on racism, its history in America, and any form of race scapegoating or race stereotyping. Additionally, the law does not require Georgia educator licensing agencies or school administrators to provide training and/or sessions on topics such as systemic racism or bias (Wade et al., 2022). It is imperative that educational spaces push back against this legislation; we

all need to discuss and be informed about issues that existed in the past and continually pervade in society today. These issues and topics are ever present. If we dismiss criticality instruction and discourse, we are bound to exist in an unprogressive nation that repeats unethical behavior and mistreats individuals and groups who are not a part of the dominant culture. Apple (2013) asserts education is political and states, “Education must hold our dominant institutions in education and the larger society up to rigorous questioning and, at the same time, this questioning must deeply involve those who benefit least from the ways these institutions now function,” (p. 98). I concur with these statements. I also believe legislation like HB 1084 is a targeted misuse of power aimed to reduce awareness and knowledge of societal ills and to abdicate accountability for groups of people who have perpetuated the societal ills of racism, bigotry, and discrimination in this country.

Organizations such as the Black Lives Matter movement have created platforms for diverse groups of people to address racism in our country and bring awareness to the reality of oppression and misuses of power that have taken the lives of Black individuals such as George Floyd and Rayshard Brooks. NCTE shares in these sentiments and challenges teachers to act,

Injustices and acts of brutality are real. In fact, they are revolting. Racist acts keep recurring, and systems of oppression continue to exist, proving the need for systemic and structural change. That change can begin with protests, but ultimately it must happen through action. As educators, we are poised to lead the way through our teaching.

(Zuidema et al., 2020, para. 2)

As teachers respond to the social injustice through our teaching practices, we are empowered to help our students also respond to the issues they face daily both locally and nationally. The current day climate of social unrest characterized by acts of police brutality and blatant racism is

coupled with the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic that was most prevalent throughout 2020 and 2021. Consequently, I conducted my study from September to November of 2021. During that time, COVID-19 was still considered a formidable threat to everyone. The impact of both COVID-19 and the social unrest in this country have not gone unnoticed by students in everyday classrooms. As the country is galvanized in this moment to speak truth to power, students can also be inspired to do the same. This initiative can be cultivated in the classroom. Teachers must emphatically create moments for students to discuss, read, and write about their lived experiences and the societal problems that inevitably affect them. During a time when a pandemic was occurring and there was heightened tensions about racial injustices, my study tackled this objective with a focus on two Black teachers advocating for critical literacy instruction and implementing critical literacy-based instruction for Black high school students.

Teacher collaboration is key. Teachers in today's social and political climate play a pivotal role in facilitating meaningful ways for students to become active members of society. Acosta et al. (2018) describe the powerful impact Black teachers can have on their Black students' educational experiences when they align with social justice-based objectives. Within this research study, I demonstrate how two Black teachers who are committed to social justice instruction collaborate to create curriculum that addresses critical issues such as racism and support Black high school students to explore their lived experiences and cultural norms. Critical collaboration and engagement are at the forefront of my study as I worked to infuse critical literacy writing instruction into the classroom culture. This critical collaboration encompassed specific interaction with a fellow ELA teacher to implement critical literacy writing. Throughout this process, my teacher collaborator and I structured and outlined the curriculum, planned

lessons, and observed student engagement and impact to the tasks and prompts we created for the class.

Collaborative planning is an essential pedagogical objective. My study traced the work of two Black teachers engaged in collaboration, committed to the process of creating curriculum that uplifts the voices of the Black student participants, and fueled by analysis of the study's impact on the students as they write for critical social change. There is a need for more critical pedagogy in schools and more attention to writing (Applebee and Langer, 2011). Specifically, there is a lack of critical writing, and when there is critical writing, it tends to be writing for imagined audiences or focused within school issues. Within my study, my teacher collaborator and I created curriculum that supported student writing that addressed societal issues and people in power who could provoke positive change.

Nguyen and Ng (2020) assert, "In school contexts, teachers are key actors in the process of implementing change for improvement in, for example, pedagogy and assessment," (p. 639). I am committed to examining the relationship that exists between the work of teachers and students. As I collected data and co-constructed instructional practices, I analyzed how teacher collaboration can strengthen the work we do as educators and present various ways that both teachers and students can be empowered for positive change. Nguyen and Ng believe that teacher collaboration should be structured in a process of "sharing, improving, and spreading." It was my goal to both share and improve instruction within teacher collaboration to contribute to critical literacy research.

As I describe in Chapter 2, literature emphasizes the need for implementation of critical literacy-based writing for social change. Scholars such as (Everett, 2018; Hall, 2017; Jocius & Woods, 2013; and Baker-Bell, 2017) describe instances of critical literacy writing initiatives that

address critical issues such as African American student identity and media representation. However, throughout my research, I did not find extant literature that explores instances of Black students writing for critical social change to realize impact outside of the classroom. Acosta et al. (2018) coined the term African American Pedagogical Excellence (AAPE) to address the powerful effect African American teachers can have on their African American students. They posit that African American students' lived experiences are affirmed and centered within the curriculum when they receive daily instruction by African American teachers who intentionally include their students' experiences and culture in the classroom (pg. 343). I view Acosta's study as a source of inspiration and alignment with my research inquiry; I believe the presence of Black teachers committed to pedagogical excellence can be an instrumental tool to invoke criticality and socio-cultural based teaching and learning in classrooms occupied by Black students. My study outlines the work of two Black teachers engaged in collaboration, committed to the process of creating curriculum that uplifts the voices of the Black student participants.

Problem

Critical pedagogy is missing in schools across the country, and the lived experiences of many Black students are not fully represented in the curriculum (Muhammad, 2019; Behizadeh et al., 2021). I describe the various strides and successes of Black people throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century in Chapter 2. As I elaborate, Black people represent a rich history of commitment to excellence in academics and society (Harris, 1992; Acosta et al., 2018). As Black people have worked to overcome the heinous crime of slavery and mass oppression, we have used education and literacy to gain access, survive, and thrive in a world that often dismisses our existence in the world. Our vast knowledge base and brilliant cultural identity continues to coincide with our norms and identification in the world. These vibrant

cultural norms and identification are often found in the Black students who occupy classrooms throughout this country. Unfortunately, there are pervasive inequalities that, in part, are attributed to a gap in opportunity as opposed to achievement that often impede the progress of many Black students in the learning environment. Berliner (2009) recognizes many of the challenges that Black students in low SES communities endure as “out-of-school factors,” (p. 1). Berliner lists six out-of-school factors such as, “food insecurity; environmental pollutants; family relations and family stress; and neighborhood characteristics,” (p. 8), as deterrents to closing the opportunity gap. These out-of-school factors are severe concerns that often interfere with in-school achievement specifically because teachers are not creating opportunities for Black students in underserved communities to discuss, share, and engage in critical curriculum that allows these students to explore and address how they are affected by these issues.

Out-of-school factors are a considerable obstacle to school success, but in-school issues also contribute to the problems underserved Black high school students experience in school. Haight et al.’s (2016) research examines in-school issues that exacerbate suspension rates for Black boys and girls. They state, “Although the suspension of Black boys has been an issue of concern, less attention has focused on Black girls, who are suspended at a rate six times higher than the rate for white girls” (p. 236). Many schools are unresponsive to the diverse needs of Black students. The gap continues to widen as school personnel fails to address the social, emotional, and cultural needs of the Black students they are charged to educate. Haight et al. further posit that adolescent Black boys often endure “emerging self and social identities” (p. 237) that contrast to the self-identification and personal development of their white counterparts; many Black boys’ emerging socialization is often met with terms such as “offender,” “crime,” “misdemeanor,” and “assault” to denote their misbehavior and subsequent suspension.

Coinciding with the criminalization of Black boys, Blake et al. (2011) suggest,

The most common behaviors Black girls are disciplined for, for example, defiance, inappropriate dress, using profane language, and physical aggression, not only vary from behaviors white girls tend to be disciplined for, they parallel stereotypic images of Black women as hypersexual, angry, and hostile. (p. 236)

Specific factors such as racism and oppression are unrelenting elements that serve to stifle the voice and progress of many Black students. It is incumbent upon teachers, administrators, and community members to offer meaningful and consistent opportunities that allow Black students to engage in learning that speaks to issues that concern them and instruction that represents their cultural dynamics.

Schools that stigmatize and mislabel Black students often neglect Black students' cultural wealth. Yosso's (2005) cultural capital framework that includes aspirational capital, familial capital, social capital, linguistic capital, navigational capital, and resistant capital is an exemplary launching pad that allows teachers, administrators, and community partners to value the wealth that Black students carry with them from home to school. School communities that have a vested interest in the lives of their Black students can emphasize their cultural capital through curriculum choices, instructional practices, and engagement. It is also important for school communities to invest in Black students' rich cultural capital in a concerted effort to remove a deficit perspective and replace it with a lens of respect for the skills and diversity Black students possess. I believe including students' cultural capital is a vital element in the teaching and learning process.

Lived Experiences of the Researcher

My journey of criticality is situated within many of my childhood memories and my professional experiences as a teacher. I highly value the work I do and the relationships I have formed with my students. My career as a teacher began with a pivotal decision that indefinitely changed my life. After graduating from Georgia State University in 2010, with a B.A. in English, I moved to Baltimore, Maryland in 2011 and became a teacher. From 2011-2016, I was a Special Education and English Language Arts teacher at a high needs urban middle and high school in the Baltimore City Schools District. My school was in an area filled with violence, crime, and drug activity. Many of my students had possibility and potential, but various environmental factors negatively impacted them. They dealt with issues of truancy, teen pregnancy, and high dropout rates. Within my role, I managed the educational plans of 20 special needs students, taught 9th-12th grade English, 7th- 8th grade Language Arts, and I created the curriculum and taught an African American Literature class. Due to these realities, my teaching experience in Baltimore City was no easy feat to tackle. My first year felt as if I were a fish out of water as I was confronted with many challenges in this new setting. A major component of my instruction focused on reading and writing assignments. I witnessed indifference and apathy within my students when prompted with these reading and writing tasks. They felt disconnected from the content and the academic requirements placed upon them. My students would say, “Why do we have to do this?” “What is the point of this?” “I won’t read and write after high school. Why should I do this now?” To hear and see my students approach their education with such disregard caused me to question my practice as an educator and the educational system. I began to invoke critical literacy pursuits into my classroom instruction to counteract these feelings and responses. I implemented writing activities that spoke directly to the societal and national issues that

plagued both my students' communities and the country. For example, I created an assignment where my students wrote about problems they observed in their neighborhood and the area surrounding the school. After identifying the problems, the students had to create ways these problems could be mitigated and how they could contribute to reducing the problems. I also created an assignment that allowed the students to address issues that impact the climate of the school; they had to list the problems they noticed in the school such as, a lack of resources or the inadequate nutritional value in the cafeteria's food, and then strategize how they could provoke change. I knew I had an interest in critical literacy and writing for social change, but I had not yet fully understood the concepts and implications associated with it.

I learned so much from my students by creating activities that spoke to their realities. Muccular (2013) states, "Educators must know the history of communities in order to provide culturally relevant curriculum, and to engage in supporting dialogue about historic community issues and socioeconomic change," (p. 43). Gaining a clearer understanding of my students' community allowed me to become a student, and they often educated me. One critical skill I have learned from my students is determination. Many of my Baltimore students dealt with various issues such as parents who worked multiple jobs, which forced them to manage their households and take care of younger siblings. These students did not always excel in school, but many of them made conscious efforts to show up to school, and if they were present, I wanted to be a source of motivation and encouragement. Teaching in that setting deepened my sense of compassion and empathy, and I learned how necessary it was to become an advocate for these young minds.

Within that five-year experience, I came to understand I was not just an educator, but I was an ally for my school community. My career pursuits guided me to a realization of

criticality, and I wanted to be better equipped to contribute to the field of educational research. In 2016, my efforts were rewarded when I obtained an M.S. degree in Educational Studies from Johns Hopkins University. In the fall of 2016, I returned to Atlanta to continue my career in education. I currently serve as a Special Education teacher in the same K-12 school district that I matriculated through. I am immensely proud to contribute to the community that helped shape who I am today. Reflecting on my past experiences leads me to my present reality as a junior scholar. As a researcher, I have gained an awareness of how racism and systemic structures impact education and stifle the potential of Black students in underserved communities. I understand how brilliant and necessary their lived experiences are to the curriculum choices we make as educators and educational researchers. I hope my research inquiry in critical literacy will add to the work being done to end this oppressive cycle of educational inequity and forge new discoveries in educational research.

Theoretical Perspectives and Framework

The theoretical frameworks that guide my study are sociocultural theory, critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and critical composition pedagogy. Each of these theories are instrumental in framing my research in critical literacy teaching and learning practices.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory emphasizes that cultural practices and societal experiences help shape our identities. Alexander and Fox (2004) posit,

Literacy research captured the shared understanding of the many rather than the private knowledge of the one. From detection of the universal laws of learning, the goal became the description of the “ways of knowing” unique to particular social, cultural, and educational group, (p. 17).

Within this conceptual framework, learning and literacy are not connected to a uniformed practice but involve interactions students have with the world. Students' socialization directly impacts how they learn, what they learn, and the ways instructors validate the lived experiences of their students. Teachers play a key role in sociocultural learning; teachers can equip students to invest in their own cultural norms and simultaneously acknowledge the norms of others around them.

Albusaidi (2019) refers to Vygotsky's (1978) instrumental work in the development of sociocultural theory, and states, "According to Vygotsky, the first principle of sociocultural theory is that development occurs at various levels. He therefore proposed the following planes of development: microgenetic, ontogenetic, cultural/historical, and evolutionary, all of which indicate changes in each individual's cognitive development," (p. 1143). Within sociocultural theory, learning is impacted by all the objects, environmental factors, and interactions that a person engages in. These engagements serve to influence our cognitive development. Cognitive development in sociocultural theories of learning is not prescriptive. Snow (1994) states, "From a sociocultural perspective, social and cultural tools shape the higher functions of the individual, whose learning is thus contextual," (p. 1143). The praxis of sociocultural theory is carried out when teachers adopt diversity in curriculum instruction. Teachers challenge students to critically analyze societal issues, and students can glean new insight from each other in shared spaces of learning.

Critical Pedagogy

Sociocultural theory is further explored through critical pedagogy. Through the efforts of Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy has become a key framework to guide criticality development in teaching and learning. Freire's seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) sought to create

a bridge between the oppressor and the oppressed. The bridge Freire wanted to establish was one that would force people in positions of hegemonic power to understand the plight and disenfranchisement of the oppressed. Freire states,

The pedagogy of the first stage must deal with the problem of the oppressed consciousness and the oppressor consciousness, the problem of men and women who oppress and men and women who suffer oppression. It must take into account their behavior, their view of the world, and their ethics. A particular problem is the duality of the oppressed: they are shaped by and existing in a concrete situation of oppression and violence, (p. 55).

Not only did Freire advocate for the powerful to gain an understanding of the plight of the oppressed, but that the oppressors would create systems and spaces where the oppressed would be respected and valued for their forms of expression, and ultimately, their literacy norms. Freire also points to the harmful effects and results of systemic suppression that the oppressed endure at the hands of the oppressor. Using the term “colonizer” and “colonized” in the book to refer to the dynamics of oppressor vs. oppressed, Freire highlights the stigmas and labels placed upon the oppressed. Freire then outlines the action this group must take to combat separations of power. “Political action on the side of the oppressed must be political action in the authentic sense of the word, and, therefore action with the oppressed,” (p. 66). Teachers and students who forge relationships that dismantle the divide of power in our society must carry out political action in the classroom. Agency, education, transformation, independence, power, intervention, and action are concepts that propel this work as the models of oppression and oppressed are critically examined. Within Freire’s framework, critical education is a shared experience between teacher and student. He writes,

The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the students' thinking.

The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them.

Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication, (p. 77).

Critical pedagogy is an extension of Freire's research on education and critical approaches to teaching and learning. Within critical pedagogy, teachers and students work together to examine school-based curriculum, deconstruct the traditional models of education, and apply what they learn in the classroom to intelligently address societal issues and problems. Critical pedagogy is also concerned with students infusing their cultural and social norms into the classroom. The classroom is not a place where students should be expected to operate as objectified robots. Teachers and students should learn from each other and challenge political structures of oppression and biases that perpetuate opportunity gaps in our country. Engaging in this work can be difficult as teachers may struggle to enact critical pedagogy with the constraints of curricula, standards, and district-mandated assessment deadlines.

A leading feature of critical pedagogy is that teachers value students' community cultural wealth. Again, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth ideology emphasizes the importance of making the classroom an inclusive space for students of color where they feel validated and supported. Without recognizing students' wealth, teachers often believe that academic literacy and dominant-cultural norms exceed the abilities of their students. Giroux (2011) posits,

At its most ambitious, the overarching narrative in this discourse is to educate students to lead a meaningful life, learn how to hold power and authority accountable, and develop the skills, knowledge, and courage to challenge while being willing to struggle for a more socially just world, (p. 7).

Giroux's research on critical pedagogy emphasizes the need for teachers and students to not only consume knowledge, but also forge transformative experiences that interrogate the status quo for both teachers and students to grow.

Critical Literacy

The criticality development teachers and students experience through critical pedagogy is enhanced in critical literacy-based practices. Critical literacy is a conceptual framework that allows students to push beyond rote learning and enhances their connection to the world around them. Critical literacy, as Gordon (2019) states, addresses "sociocultural, sociohistorical, and sociopolitical contexts of academic knowledge during classroom instruction," (p. 3). Students who engage in critical literacy initiatives are better equipped to provoke change within their world. Morrell (2004) states that critical literacy fosters,

The ability to challenge existing power relations in texts and to produce new texts that delegitimize these relations, a consciousness of the relationship between the dominant culture's use of language and literacy and social injustice, the ability not only to read words but to read the world into and onto texts and recognize the correlation between the word and the world, and the ability to create political texts that inspire transformative action and conscious reflection, (p. 54).

Based on this assertion, active critical literacy can be a powerful tool for Black high school students to examine racism, limited community resources, and societal mistreatment.

Additionally, critical literacy is neither tidy nor neat. Teachers and students who commit to the work of critical literacy must be willing to disrupt and unravel customary forms of skill acquisition. This includes expanding the scope of literature, so students are exposed to diverse authors beyond White canonical texts, allowing students' issues and concerns to guide

instruction as opposed to following a scripted lesson plan and outdated curriculum pacing guide, and infusing cultural relevance into lesson activities to emphasize diversity. Muhammad (2019) refers to this work as “agitating” uniformity and using multiple modalities to speak against oppression. Muhammad (2019) focuses on four areas that help shape instruction in this discipline: identity, skill, intellect, and criticality. It is through these four areas that critical literacy can flourish, and students are prompted to consider the world around them through the paradigm of education.

Critical literacy activities are often situated in pedagogical practices that include elements of criticality, societal norms, and the relationships formed between teachers, students, and their environments. Everett (2018) asserts, “Critical pedagogy and critical literacy seek to understand, analyze, problematize, and act against asymmetrical relationships between people and social institutions in teaching and learning,” (p. 38). A primary goal of critical literacy is to incite teachers and students to investigate social dynamics such as power, politics, and culture as a joint effort. Critical literacy efforts strive to make the learning environment an engaging space where learning is shared, and students feel a sense of belonging in the classroom. Teachers have a unique ability to embrace their students’ individuality and enhance their self-worth by investing in their personal interests. In *Teaching Critical Thinking*, (2009) hooks addresses the necessity for teachers to tap into their students’ interests. When teachers effectively reach their students, they create meaningful lessons and activities where students’ voices are not only heard, but also appreciated. Students, however, must understand the critical nature of this process, and contribute in constructive ways that promote and instill agency. Hooks (2009) states,

In the engaged classroom students learn the value of speaking and of dialogue, and they also learn to speak when they have something meaningful to contribute. Understanding

that every student has a valuable contribution to offer to a learning community means that we honor all capabilities (p. 22).

Through my scholarship, I explored how critical literacy can be used as a source of power for students and the collaborative role of teachers as co-constructors in this dynamic.

Critical Composition Pedagogy

Recognizing and valuing the social and cultural norms that each student brings into the classroom is extremely important. It is through critical pedagogy and critical literacy that teachers and students can approach education with a wider scope and dismantle dominant cultural norms that hinder and stifle individual expression and multi-literacy development. Critical composition pedagogy works similarly as teachers intentionally make the learning environment an equitable and balanced place where students are encouraged to discovery agency by using their voice. I believe critical composition pedagogy is an extension of critical pedagogy and critical literacy. Critical composition pedagogy works to enact change as teachers create opportunities for students to discuss and learn about societal issues and analyze and examine ways to address these issues through critical writing. Duffelmeyer (2005) states, “critical composition pedagogy scholars, such as Russell Durst, Ann Class George, and Amy Lee, present critical composition pedagogy aimed at “helping students develop ways of thinking about the world and their place in it and understanding language as an integral part of this process,” (p. 33). Much like critical pedagogy and critical literacy, critical composition pedagogy encourages students to engage in self-reflection, but they are challenged to purpose this reflection in the ways they write and what they write about. Duffelmeyer further posits, “students should use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating; understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing

appropriate primary and secondary sources; integrate their own ideas with those of other,” (p. 33).

Critical composition pedagogy is a necessary theoretical framework for teachers who want to expose their students to multiple life perspectives, the history and current representations of suppression and racism in our society, and a range of cultural expression. Critical composition pedagogy also reinforces my research inquiry and scholarship; I am interested in examining instructional practices in critical literacy writing by co-constructing opportunities for students to do more than talk about oppression, racism, and inequity, but to support teachers and students as they are empowered to write for impact and to address people of power to provoke and incite positive change. Behizadeh et al. (2019) reiterate my theoretical stance and highlight that critical composition pedagogy allows students to, “critique the external world, their own positioning within the world, inequitable power dynamics, and representations of truth in texts,” (p. 59).

My research study is outlined with critical literacy guiding my inquiry. Sociocultural learning, critical pedagogy, and critical composition pedagogy are the frameworks that structure my study. My study employed Morrell’s (2003) critical composition pedagogy framework as a tool for curriculum creation and instructional tasks. Morrell describes the CCP tenets as,

1. Historicity. Critical composition pedagogy must begin with students’ experiences as citizens of the world.
2. Problem-posing. A critical composition pedagogy must embrace, as its curriculum, the real-world problems, and struggles of marginalized people in the world.
3. Dialogic. A critical composition pedagogy must entail authentic humanizing interactions with people in the world.
4. Emancipatory. A critical composition pedagogy must confront social injustice and have

as its project liberation from oppressive realities; and

5. Praxis. A critical composition pedagogy must be about action and reflection upon that action (p. 9).

Incorporating Morrell's CCP tool served as the basis for learning objectives, student-centered lessons, activities, and structured the critical work I created, documented, and examined.

The next chapter transitions from a description of the frameworks that guided this study into the literature I researched and reviewed that offers deeper insight into the history of literacy and the empirical work of critical literacy researchers in spaces of teaching and learning.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

With my research focus and interests in mind, I searched for literature that would provide information on the work education-based researchers and educators are doing in the field of critical literacy and writing, particularly with Black students. Within these readings, teachers and researchers construct curriculum for criticality that allows for Black students to speak to the issues they observe within their community, media, and society. I found a common thread as I reviewed the literature and read through different articles. Many of the readings address the need for critical literacy and the ways to incorporate critical literacy in the classroom to support the academic needs of Black students. These texts show intense scholarship in the field of critical literacy. In conjunction with the above-mentioned literary research, I also searched for literature that addresses teacher collaboration in teaching and learning. I was interested in reading literature that describes the process and impact of teacher collaboration to gain a better sense of the work teachers are doing to affect curriculum choices and student engagement.

I conducted a search through Georgia State University's online library to read and synthesize articles on critical literacy writing instruction for Black students and the process and impact of teacher collaboration. I used EBSCOhost to narrow my findings. The terms and phrases I used to search for literature include: "critical literacy," "Black students," "underserved," "K-12 education writing for social change," "writing for impact and change," "minoritized students," "writing instruction," "teacher collaboration," "activist literacies," "teacher and student interaction," "opportunity gap," "underserved students," "reading and writing literacy," "instructional collaboration," "high school instruction," "student achievement," and "collaborative education." I also searched for literature in the *Journal of Adult and Adolescent Literacy*, the *Journal of Research in the Teaching of English*, and the *National*

Council of Teachers of English. I searched for literature in these journals because my target student demographic is high school age, and my subject focus is in English/Language Arts content. My search yielded over 400 results. I have reviewed articles that highlight my search criteria. These articles respond to my research inquiry, but I believe they do not present extant inquiry into students writing for impact in a way that confronts people in power with an objective to incite change on a macro level. I found an abundance of literature that focused on students collaborating during instruction. I also found significant literature on collaboration in STEM-based curriculum and instruction. It is my goal to contribute to literature that describes the importance of teachers collaborating for criticality to infuse critical literacy writing instruction into the classroom and encourage Black high school students to write for critical social change.

Before I review the literature, I explore how literacy has been defined and interpreted throughout the 20th century and into the 21st century. I also describe efforts within the Black experience to establish literacy development as a means of survival, success, and criticality development.

Contextual Literacy

As stated, education is political (Apple, 2013). This assertion is evident in the literacy instructional practices in this country. Prevalent identifications of literacy are often positioned to accommodate dominant cultural norms and dismiss sociocultural learning concepts that make the classroom a more inclusive environment. One familiar view of literacy is that reading and writing instruction could be established through constant repetition that would produce fluency and comprehension. In conjunction with this ideal of repetitious instruction was the concept that students produce satisfactory results if they engage in literacy instruction in the controlled

environment of the classroom (Glaser, 1978). Alexander and Fox (2013) reference the period as, “The Era of Conditioned Learning,” (p. 4), and state,

The task for this generation of reading researchers, therefore, was to untangle the chained links of behavior involved in reading so learners could be trained in each component skill. The act of reading consisted of the competent and properly sequenced performance of that chain of discrete skills, (p. 6).

The Era of Conditioned Learning focused on B. F. Skinner’s (1976) behavioral expectations, and the implications of the environmental stimulant of the classroom to foster literacy development. While this era enhanced phonics and phonemic awareness, it did not account for the different processes of learning and cognitive development that existed in classrooms throughout the country. I find this view of literacy as divisive and extremely rigid.

Three interpretations of literacy that have become popular throughout the 1980s into the 21st century speak to the rich diversity that many underrepresented students bring to the classroom. These understandings of literacy have been coined “The Era of Sociocultural Learning,” “The Era of Engaged Learning,” and “The Emergent Era of Goal-Directed Learning,” Alexander and Fox (2013). The Sociocultural Learning Era witnessed a shift towards capturing shared knowledge and “the ways of knowing” for groups of people. Literacy research and subsequent instruction began to focus on how social environments and cultural traditions influence and inform skill retention and knowledge acquisition. Teale and Sulzby (1986) assert, “Children are constructors of meaning, literacy development takes place in social settings as children interact with adults, and literacy develops most fully in contexts that promote meaning and purpose in writing and reading,” (p.17). Literacy researchers and theorists such as Brian Street (1995) popularized the term “multi-literacies” in this era to signify the different literacy

representations found within cultural and social environments that students brought to the school setting. Additional research into the construct of “multi-literacies” came from the New London Group (1996). Within this study, “A multiliteracies perspective sees writing as variable, arising from, embedded in, and mutually constituting social contexts. This plurality reflects an awareness of an increasing cultural and linguistic diversity,” (p. 19). Within the era of goal-directed learning spaces have been created where learners are not just motivated to read or where their multi-literacies are included in the classroom, but the learning environment has now been structured for students to examine and identify the purposes and goals within what they read. It is now incumbent upon the learner to take a critical stance as they participate in the reading process. Alexander and Fox (2013) pinpoint,

Competent readers’ intentions are to ponder and interrogate text, to regard the content of that text relative to questions they are presented with or formulate themselves. In other words, their goal is to read critically and analytically for the purpose of learning *about*, *with*, and *from* text, (p. 28).

My definition and understanding of literacy is influenced by the above interpretations of literacy and its transition throughout the 20th and 21st century. However, I must also honor and reflect on the struggles and strides of Black people as we have fought to create literacy norms to help us successfully navigate within a world that is oppositional and oppressive. At the turn of the 20th century, Anderson (1988) estimates that African American literacy increased by 20 to 30 percent from that of the 20 percent rate in the late 1800s. This fact is attributed to the collective efforts of important institutions such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. These institutions served as pivotal meeting grounds for Black people to develop reading and writing skills in a world that did not afford abundant opportunities for Black people to become literate

and educated. Books such as *The College of Life* (1896) were cultural texts that provided instruction to African Americans of all ages on Biblical principles, etiquette, marriage, physical strength and endurance, and standard American language. *The College of Life* was essential as a survival guide in a time of extreme bigotry. I find a connection to Muhammad's (2018) research on Black literacy development through an examination of how Black people obtained and used literacy in the early 20th century. In her work and research, she situates Black people's literacy gains throughout the 19th and into the 20th century in four areas: "identity development, skill development, intellectual development, and criticality," (p. 138). It is through these four specific areas that Black people used literacy to learn more about themselves in conjunction with the world around them, cultivated their aptitude and knowledge base to become more informed about specific topics and information, and finally used literacy to assess racism, power, and their position in an oppressive world.

During the early 20th century, literacy acquisition was a tool for Black people to fight against racism and to achieve a sense of equality after many years of withheld education. Important Black figures such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington advocated for Black people to pursue education to successfully navigate in society. As the founder of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Washington promoted industrial education and believed, "African Americans should receive basic instruction in reading, writing, composing, and computing but should also receive training to assume jobs upon completion of their education," (p. 282). DuBois took another stance on literacy, and he posited that African Americans should obtain "the highest level of education possible," (p. 282). DuBois would support this claim by stating that Black students should integrate colleges and universities, by creating publishing companies, and he eventually published a periodical for children and youth, *The Brownies' Book* (1920-

1921), to support literacy progress within the Black community. Although both men had alternative views on educational access, they were inspirational leaders who understood the power of education. They also understood that the development of reading and writing skills could serve as a catalyst for Black people to fight against racism and forge lives that emphasized the areas of identity, intellect, skill, and criticality development.

Continued exploration into literacy development for Black students can be found in Acosta et al.'s (2018) scholarship. Their research focuses on examining how direct instruction from Black teachers can serve to empower classrooms inhabited by Black students. Acosta et al. posit, "Effective African American educators consider culture an invaluable resource for teaching, learning, and life. These teachers incorporate content that affirms culture(s) and history into classroom practice and link academic tasks to daily experiences and cultural life(s)," (pg. 343). Acosta et al. emphasize the communal sense of cultural norms and lived experiences that many Black teachers often share with their Black students. This commonality creates community in the classroom and helps affirm the cultural capital, struggles, and triumphs that both Black teachers and students embody. Throughout this study, the authors define the concept of African American Pedagogical Excellence (AAPE) as a form of effective teaching and learning within the African American experience. AAPE affirms Black students' cultural norms, supports opposition and resistance to "mainstream American cultural values and social practices," (pg. 344), and supports Black students as they understand the importance of successfully navigating life with an awareness of societal ills such as racism and bigotry. As both an African American teacher and junior scholar, I value the tenets of AAPE and apply many of these principles in my social justice orientation as an instructor and researcher.

After reflecting on crucial moments in the history of literacy coupled with the Black experience, I look forward to contributing to emergent research that seeks to highlight how critical literacy supports today's Black students in writing for social change. I view my study as a tool for Black students to engage with their instructors and each other in activities that encourage them to critically assess the world around them, the oppressive dynamics that stifle their voice, and then address these problems in a way that emphasizes their criticality, skill, intellect, and identity development. In Harris' 1992 article, "African-American Conceptions of Literacy: A Historical Perspective," she offers a dynamic perspective on critical literacy gains that is just as relevant today as it was in 1992. In discussing literacy skill acquisition for African Americans, Harris asserts, "Literacy can liberate and culturally and historically authentic literature is needed in order to inspire youth to achieve," (p. 284). Harris further states, "Learning about oneself and seeing one's culture affirmed would have a tremendous impact on motivation. This, too, is a lesson from the past," (p. 284).

Understanding the importance of Harris' statement brings me back to my definition of literacy. As stated, I define literacy as the ways we process information that translates to how we read, write, and comprehend. This literacy translation is connected to how we read and understand the world around us. Literacy is also inclusive of our cultural and social experiences that contribute to how we learn and how we apply that knowledge for individual power and agency. With this ideology in mind, reading and writing instruction should reflect the cultural, social, and lived experiences of the learner. This specific reading and writing instruction must also be curated to expose learners to the diverse and varied experiences of others. Teaching and learning that encompasses these literacy norms provides the necessary structure for students to engage in meaningful praxis of reading and writing. Teaching and learning that emphasizes the

aforementioned praxis is exemplified through specific reading and writing objectives that honor sociocultural learning, student engagement, and goal-oriented activities where students challenge the status quo and initiate change. Criticality within these constructs of learning must look at reform through efforts that speak against subjugation and oppression.

Critical Literacy Literature and Research

Research and literature on critical literacy has shown that critical literacy-based instruction and activities are engaging and enhance education. Empirical studies such as Morrell's (2008) *The Art of Critical Pedagogy*, Echeverri and Hytten's (2008) *Reflecting on Revolution*, and the elementary school-based reading, "Saving Black Mountain: The Promise of Critical Literacy," by Powell et al. (2001) provide salient examples of critical literacy in action beyond the classroom. In these texts, students develop agentive power by using their authorial voices to incite change in their communities. As a junior scholar, I co-authored "Supporting Students in Writing for Critical Social Change in K-12 Schools." My colleagues and I note that critical literacy writing increases criticality and positive identity development in students increases student engagement, and increases writing quality, with different purposes for writing aligning with different outcomes (Behizadeh, Salter, & Thompson-Smith, 2021). We highlight different examples of teachers who incorporate writing for critical social change in their classroom curriculum. Examples and exploration from our study include the following research. Sepúlveda's (2011) literacy collaborative details the criticality development with twenty-four transmigrant high school boys. Sepúlveda met with "*El Grupo*" twice a week for five months during school hours to read, discuss, and write poetry around the theme of "border crossing," literally and metaphorically. Students then shared poems with members of the collaborative. The purpose for writing is identity development and collectively raising consciousness, which are

also valued student outcomes. Singer and Shagoury (2005) detail a year-long curriculum on social activism with a class of diverse 9th grade students in an urban setting. Students read self-selected texts on social activists, participated in reading and writing workshops to develop literacy skills, shared diverse perspectives during class discussions, and finally created and shared multimodal activist projects, accompanied by written “artist statements” in a gallery walk. The desired impact in the final project was communicating ideas to other classmates about an issue that mattered to them. Each project included a call to action in which students shared ways other students could address the issue. These instances of critical literacy-based teaching and learning are varied and highlight how writing for critical social change can serve as an empowering tool for students.

Literature Review Chart

I created a table of literature I read and reviewed along with a synthesis of the material and its alignment with specific headings. Two readings overlap into multiple sections. Each section’s synthesis reveals the need for my research study. (See Table 1 below).

Table 1

Literature Review Table

Black Student Identity Development	Critical Literacy and Media Representation	Writing for Social Change	Teacher Collaboration
Burtch (2018)	Baker-Bell et al. (2017)	Burtch (2018)	Burtch (2018)
Everett (2018)	Koonce (2017)	Chapman et al. (2011)	Gideon (2002)
Hall (2017)	Nelson (2018)	Christensen (2017)	Ronfeldt et al. (2015)
Jocius & Woods (2013)		Frankel (2016)	Vicente (2017)
Mirra et al. (2015)		Janks (2013)	Acosta et al. (2018)
Muhammad (2019)		McCardle (2017)	Nguyen & Ng (2020)
Pandya et al. (2015)		Mirra et al. (2015)	
Putnam (2001)			
Sepúlveda (2011)			
Singer & Shagoury			

(2005)
Stevenson & Beck
(2017)

Table 1 continued

Literature Review Table

Black Student Identity Development	Critical Literacy and Media Representation	Writing for Critical Social Change	Teacher Collaboration
Synthesis -Instruction is crafted to allow Black students to examine their identities and write about societal issues through culturally relevant texts and alternative literacy reading and writing activities. Students participate in critical literacy, but practice does not extend beyond the classroom.	Synthesis -Instruction is designed for Black students to critically assess media stereotypes and their affects through multimodal writing activities. Instruction and writing purpose are situated in the classroom.	Synthesis -Students are challenged to question issues such as racism, inequality, and curriculum biases. These writing activities are positioned to support students to become change agents, but the writing prompts do not create opportunities for students to address issues beyond the school setting.	Synthesis -Teacher collaboration is effective and beneficial for improving instructional practices and student growth and development. Scholarship and literary examples of teacher collaboration for criticality and within critical literacy are not prevalent.

Centering Black Students' Identities in the Curriculum

I begin my literature review with three readings that center around curriculum choices constructed to engage Black students in writing instruction that focuses on critical literacy and sociocultural learning. Everett's "Untold Stories" (2018) is aimed at disrupting the false narrative that Black males are indifferent about school and perform poorly on standardized assessments. Everett infuses the use of metaphorical writing into the classroom and views this activity as a critical literacy practice for Shawn, the focus student of the study. Shawn, a black male teenager,

composes an argumentative essay titled “Incarcerated Students.” Within the essay, Shawn draws parallels among the rigid prison experience and the often stifling and restrictive school experience. Metaphorical writing allows students to address societal issues (within the context of critical literacy) to address literal situations and improve literacy proficiency.

Everett conducts her study through the “We Choose to Learn” program. One objective of the program is “to prepare high school students of color for college and to nurture their career interests in education,” (p. 39). Through his writing, focus student Shawn, upheld the program’s goals as he increased his scholastic potential and eventually pursued a college degree in Education. Everett’s writing further serves to dispel misconceptions about Black male students and their academic endeavors. The implication of the research here shows how specific critical literacy writing instruction can instill agency within participants and students in the study. Shawn was able to use his writing to address issues in his school and discover his passion for education. However, this study does not tackle writing that extends to people in power who are able to affect systemic change. “We Choose to Learn” is substantiated by providing opportunities for students of color to be equipped for college by creating school-based activities rooted in critical literacy. “We Choose to Learn” and Everett’s study are ideal for motivating Black students to consider careers in education, but my study motivated Black students to consider their futures and investigate what they can do right now, in their current position, to speak to individuals in power for change.

Additional research sought to create opportunities for Black male students to examine reading and writing through a critical literacy lens. Jocius and Woods (2013) addresses this through an instructional method called the 3 Cs to enhance the learning experience for young Black male students. The three Cs instructional method, which centers on critical literacy efforts,

includes culturally relevant texts, collaboration, and critical conversations. Within culturally relevant texts, the authors mention how young Black male students should be exposed to literature that reflects their images and culture. The text includes a vignette where a Black male student is persuaded to read a book because the cover depicts a familiar Black face. The authors explain that these types of texts should be abundant in a culturally diverse classroom library. Collaboration involves engagement with peer-to-peer activity in the classroom. The literacy process is enhanced when students can learn from one another and share experiences that relate to their lives and the text. Finally, a critical literacy-based classroom must encompass critical conversations. These conversations must address societal issues, community problems, and the power that reading and writing can provide for disenfranchised students.

The article provides a clear and helpful framework for creating spaces for minority students to engage in critical literacy activities. The reading's implications offer practical ways for teachers to infuse culturally competent and relevant instruction into the classroom. A major assertion within the article is the notion that the classroom is an ideal place for teachers and students to engage in meaningful dialogue about societal issues and real-world concerns. The three C instructional method described in the article is useful for engaging Black students in the classroom. It also creates opportunities for Black students to see themselves in literature and discuss reasons why Black students need to see increased representation and identification in school-based texts. The three C model is used to promote critical thinking, but this model and the conducted study frames critical literacy within the classroom context. While it is beneficial for Black students to engage in these conversations and curriculum practices, the conversation and instruction cannot be confined to the classroom environment. The next step is to address the community and the world.

Critical literacy writing efforts have the power to disrupt the norm in classroom curricular. In “Deeper than Rap,” H. Bernard Hall (2017), a former English teacher, positions critical literacy writing in an insightful way and advocates for the inclusion of “Hip-Hop based education” in English classrooms. Hall’s goal is

To inspire teachers, teacher educators, and researchers to think more broadly and deeply about the ways hip-hop cultural knowledge can “remix” not only conceptions of literary and informational texts in the ELA classroom, but composition and participation as well (p. 342).

Hall believes hip-hop can serve as a conduit for textual deconstruction. The basis of his claim is that if students can evaluate meaning in the lyrics of conscious rappers such as Common and Tupac, they will then translate that critical skill to traditional reading and writing practices. For students to develop this skill however, teachers must be able to assess the necessity of implementing this intervention strategy. To provide greater context for his position, Hall connects the hip-hop exercises of “freestyling” and “ciphery” to common activities in the English classroom. Hall situates “freestyling,” the act of improvisational rapping, to students being able to brainstorm and journal their ideas as they prepare to complete drafts and organize their ideas. “Ciphery” –the act of rapping and dancing that occurs in a group setting is related to peer-to-peer interaction where students can bounce ideas off each other and gain insight about their writing. Hall’s desire is for teachers to use hip-hop to engage students. He is emphatic that teachers must not use this technique in a culturally appropriated fashion, but they must genuinely view hip-hop as a tool to bridge critical thinking and deconstruct curricular mandates that do not speak to the concerns of today’s student.

“Deeper than Rap” highlights a pivotal tenet of critical literacy initiatives- the push for relevant instruction and engaging activities that students of color can relate to. How can this critical pedagogical practice be extended? What if students who participated in Hip-Hop based education addressed their school board and petitioned them to expand music programs for inner city schools? The students could have also gained some agentive power by showing the school board or the school’s administration how their writing skills were enhanced through music. Acting beyond the scope of the classroom can propel critical literacy in a forward direction.

“Revolutionizing Inquiry in Urban English Classrooms” (2015) continues the examination into centering Black students’ experiences into the curriculum. The reading analyzes effective ways teachers have incorporated critical literacy instruction into their curriculum through a YPAR- Youth Participatory Action Research based design method. The authors believe that a YPAR framework helps marginalized communities of students “to develop and direct research projects that feature exploration of personal experiences and often-silenced community,” (p. 49). PAR is a beneficial orientation to best support students with the task of surveying and tackling systemic issues such as discrimination and racism.

Three vignettes frame the reading as the article begins with a focus on research-oriented instruction. In this tale, teacher Nicole Mirra describes how she made literacy relevant to her students and strengthened their writing by exposing them to autobiographical literature and informational texts in the *Los Angeles Times* that allowed them to analyze sociopolitical issues that mirrored the existing problems in their own communities. Students were then charged to interview their community and family members about these issues and compose narratives that addressed the effects of systemic oppression. The second tale is concerned with action. The second story, set in Detroit, equips students “with critical media strategies to interrogate the

sensationalized narratives perpetuated by media outlets, and to understand the historical origins of Detroit's economic crisis," (p. 52). As students created an event entitled, "We Want Our City Back," they addressed community members and political figures about issues such as crime, poverty, and media representation to provoke positive change in their communities.

The article's final story describes a participatory approach to learning. Teacher Antero Garcia empowers his students in South Central Los Angeles to explore the low budget cuts that affected the school. Students then interviewed community members about the negative impact of these budget cuts for the community and nearby public schools. This project culminated in the students creating a play entitled, "Stop It: Our Future, A Threat," that stressed how school budgets cuts were affecting students, staff, and the entire South Central Los Angeles community," (p. 54). The stories and objectives represented throughout this article reflect the action-based work that I endeavor to engage in. These vignettes describe how teachers can incorporate critical literacy into the classroom in a way that emphasizes agitation to strengthen students' resolve to address people in power for positive change. As I position myself within this necessary work, I hope my research supports criticality development in teaching and learning for Black students in the Atlanta area.

Each author in this section commits to meaningful work and effectively documents their efforts. Expanding curriculum and incorporating relevant and meaningful instruction is key for teachers who are committed to criticality and this necessary work should exist outside of the classroom setting. The praxis of critical literacy that I endeavor to pursue extends this criticality to environments outside of the classroom to reach groups of people in positions of power and influence.

Critical Literacy and The Media

We live in a digital and technology-driven society. Virtual platforms have become common forms of interaction to participate in everyday correspondence. Consequently, educators must incorporate this functionality into their instruction to maintain relevance and students' attention. Koonce (2017) examines the need for teachers to include both critical literacy and digital media instruction into the classroom. The article, entitled "The Roles of Digital Literacies and Critical Literacy for Black Adolescent Females," frames the need for literacy practices and digital media knowledge. Koonce further frames her research in an empirical study of five black female students. Koonce highlights a group of young black girls who are voracious readers. Through Koonce's study, she describes the students' critical analysis of African American themed texts and literature such as *The Hunger Games*. One student analyzes the use of a black character in *The Hunger Games* and questions if the character is misused as a stereotype. Koonce also calls for the students to examine representations of Black men and women in literature. Within this examination, she explores how the students take note of stereotypes in literature, misrepresentations of Black figures, and the absence of Black protagonists in literature. The study is also concerned with the students' access to technology and multimedia devices. Koonce believes the 21st century student needs these tools to succeed, and she makes the claim that many Black students' intellectual growth is stifled because they do not have access to these devices.

A common theme throughout each student's vignette is a lack of in-depth digital media literacy. Although the girls are active readers, Koonce states, "The participants' focus on consumption, and not production speaks to the need for teachers to share and demonstrate how digital products are beneficial to the reading experience," (p. 98). Koonce's study tackles the importance of exposing students to digital media literacy and critical literacy writing. Koonce

posits educators must be aware and inclusive of the power of digital media literacy and how these various mediums can “prepare students to make a difference in their lives and the marginalized citizenry,” (p. 92). With this awareness, additional inquiry can be conducted to push for opportunities for Black students to use digital mediums to participate in email correspondence and compose web-based communication to address people in power for change. Black students who are excited about reading and developing digital literacy can be encouraged to use their voices to speak to their school board and potential community partners about providing multimedia devices like laptops and kindles to schools in need.

The continued exploration of media influenced education is described in “The Stories They Tell” (2017). The article examines the negative and devastating images of African Americans in the media within the last ten years. Baker-Bell et al. highlight pivotal moments such as the murders of Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, and Mike Brown as mishandled media moments; several news correspondents labeled many of these slain individuals as responsible for their own murders. Baker-Bell et al. state the media’s constant double standards that debase Black humanity while normalizing white criminal behavior have left damaging effects on young Black minds. To combat these negative media images, the authors present an instructional method titled “critical media pedagogy.” This pedagogy has main functions:

There are two sets of tools. Tools to heal: acknowledging that the wounds exist and identifying its culprit, and tools to transform: responding to the wound using a tool that works to transform the conditions that led to the wound, (p. 139).

Baker-Bell et al. view critical media literacy as a process that help young people understand the role that “media play, both positively and problematically, in shaping social thought,” (p. 139). Implications for critical media literacy are outlined through four separate

lesson plans that tackle issues such as stereotypes in mainstream media, examination of critical consumption and production of media that perpetuates damaging narratives about Black youth, and shared experiences related to racial injustice. Baker-Bell and colleagues encourage teachers to create classrooms that are transparent and incite students to critically assess the world around them and the media's influence on how they are represented in the world. The educational design in this study offers practical and viable methods for teachers and students to engage in authentic analysis of race and media representations of Black figures.

Engaging in the important and necessary work described in “The Stories They Tell” cannot be conducted in a vacuum. It is vital that this critical research consider the power of partnership. Collaboration is a key component in my study. Incorporating key stakeholders such as fellow teachers, community partners, and policymakers will enhance the students' participation in critical literacy activities and increase the potential to reach people in positions of power and influence. Baker-Bell et al.'s study initiates a relevant cause for Black students to critically agitate uniformity by assessing the power of media. The next step is to consider the implications for continued criticality and how students can use their voice to speak to the societal and problems that exist. I strive to consider and explore these issues in my study.

Author Kathryn Scott Nelson's “Popular Culture as a Scaffold for Critical Analysis” (2018) continues examination of media representation and stereotyped depictions of Black people as students critically analyze these images. The study is comprised of 22 seventh grade racially diverse students in a low-SES school district. Nelson exposes the students to critical literacy practices through units that include pop culture media, segregation, and whitewashing beauty standards.

The students apply a critical analysis of media to the classroom and challenge social ideologies that depict the functions of society (p. 43). The students uncover concepts such as white privilege and the underlying racism that exists in many of the images the media purports as standards of beauty. As students write to deconstruct these images, they are empowered to synthesize the absence of their diverse lived experiences and aesthetic value within the media. This division of critical literacy writing is current and identifiable to today's adolescent.

Incorporating multimedia knowledge and literacy are instrumental factors to prepare today's student for success. The researchers throughout the studies spoke to this need for this specific competency and analyzed how critical literacy works in tandem with the 21st century classroom. As Black students are equipped with these skills, it is mutually important that they take advantage of multimedia communication and devices that allow them to express themselves and gain outside attention and correspondence.

Writing for Social Change

Critical literacy activities must incorporate elements of social justice and reform that allow students to survey the political landscape and the social inequities around them. The following literature provides examples of agitation that supports students using their voice to speak against societal issues. In "A Social Justice Approach as a Base for Teaching Writing," Chapman et al. (2011) describe the implementation of social justice instruction where a class of 30 students develop an "awareness of societal challenges that affect students' families, communities, and the larger society," (p. 539). Social justice education critically includes racial, cultural, and social contexts so students can speak against societal inequalities. Within the study, students engage in narrative, poetry, and expository writing to address social justice issues.

An outstanding component of the text highlights the three questions students were

required to respond to: “What concerns you? Which of these issues concerns your families and communities? Do these same issues distress the world on a global level?” (p. 540). Through these tasks, students enacted their personal voices to connect to social issues around them, but also analyzed the impact of social issues around the world. The intersection of critical literacy pursuits and social justice instruction allowed the students to think critically about their communities, the world, and the validity of their stories within these structures.

The students constructed original pieces, and they also collaborated with each other for peer review of their work. “Through the peer-response activity, students discuss important issues and receive feedback,” (p. 541). One of the most distinctive measures I forged in my research process was supporting student participants’ agency development by creating opportunities for them to learn from important speakers, writers, and change agents who could potentially influence their voice.

Students find themselves in the literature they read in “The Intersection of Reading and Identity in High School Literacy Intervention Classes” (2016). Author Katherine Frankel addresses the issue of high school reading and writing instruction that focuses on critical literacy through self-identity and personal reflection. The study’s main objective is to fill a critical gap in secondary literacy interventions. Aligning with a sociocultural framework, Frankel asserts that identity, interest, and connection are intrinsic to a student’s desire to read and write. The three previously stated traits are evolutionary and directly correlate to literacy acquisition.

Through the study of two students, Dennis’ and Tory’s, inclusion in a reading intervention program, Frankel was able to understand the students’ identification with literacy and the implications of acquiring literacy skills when the given texts are relative to the students’ cultural norms and lived experiences. Frankel’s conclusion states,

More research that takes a sociocultural perspective in adolescents' reading in school, in general, and in intervention contexts, is essential to develop reading measures that capture adolescents' literacy practices in light of these students' emerging identities as readers and agents of their own learning, (p. 56).

Like Frankel, I co-constructed curriculum that employs a sociocultural framework.

Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development is instrumental in sociocultural instruction. With sociocultural learning and zones of proximal development in mind, pivotal and specific questions must be posed; within this inquiry, how are teachers incorporating content that challenges students to not only be engaged, but also write for critical social change? Classroom instruction should not only attract students and speak to their identity, but also thrust them into an awareness of the world around them and how they can find ways to "agitate" the status quo and deconstruct problems in a concerted effort.

One of the sub-questions in my study is, "How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?" Throughout the readings, each author cultivated curriculum that allowed their students to talk back to the text and infuse their identity within the scope of sociocultural instruction. However, I believe student writing that is positioned for critical social change should reach individuals who can enact positive change. The stories, identities, and representations of Black students should be accessible to people in power such as curriculum writers, politicians, and community leaders. With this awareness, school curriculum can begin to incorporate criticality and diversity. Communities can work to reduce inequality, and Black students may feel more valued in the school setting.

Instructors who are committed to teaching about representations of racism and bigotry have dual responsibilities. These instructors cannot incorporate these forms of literature into the

classroom solely for reading purposes. They must create activities rooted in critical literacy that incite students to assess what they have read, examine societal issues, and think critically about how these issues impact them and the world around them. Author Todd McCardle details how he tackles this daunting task in “The Horror of Structural Racism: Helping Students Take a Critical Stance Using Classic Literature” (2017). The reading explores McCardle’s implementation of the novella *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad as he teaches his students about structural racism. McCardle analyzed specific lines of the book with his students so they could examine the institution of racism holistically. McCardle creates instruction that allows his students to understand the wide-reaching influence of racism as a construct of power and suppression. Before diving into *Heart of Darkness*, McCardle and his students discuss terms such as prejudice, discrimination, and racism to better understand the meanings of these terms and how different groups of people have been impacted by each term throughout history. McCardle also introduces a current supplemental text to pair with the analysis of *Heart of Darkness*. He includes Sensoy and DiAngelo’s (2012) book, *Is Everyone Really Equal?* to strengthen the students’ understanding of racism and inequality as discussed in *Heart of Darkness*. Through an analysis of the novella, students identify the impact of racism throughout history to the present day. As the students analyze the text, they are equipped to better define racism and examine distinctions in prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Students also review specific quotes in *Heart of Darkness* to further synthesize structural racism throughout time.

McCardle offers applicable and practical strategies to create critical literacy-based lessons. McCardle constructs critical literacy-based activities to coincide with the text such as presenting scenarios for students to assess and identify instances of racism, discrimination, and bias. He cites that critical literacy initiatives should: a. challenge common assumptions and

values, b. explore multiple perspectives, c. examine relationships of power, and d. reflection and use of literacy practices (p. 98). These activities allow the students to explore social injustice within the scope of teaching and learning in the course curriculum. McCardle advises teachers to take mandatory curriculum guidelines and make them “culturally relevant for all students.” McCardle structures his critical literacy-based lessons around a sensitive text to enhance his students’ awareness to systemic problems like misuses of power and oppression. The four tenets of critical literacy that he describes were relevant to my study. As my study’s student participants were exposed to texts similar to *Heart of Darkness*, they compared the information they read with the instances of racism and inequality they observe in their communities and society. Much like the instructional strategies McCardle employs, I also believe that education should be relevant for all students, and when that relevance is accomplished, the next objective is a call to action. My study charged students to investigate pivotal texts that discussed racial inequality to strengthen their arguments and speak against societal issues.

The work of critical literacy in action is further explored as author Linda Christensen (2017) describes her efforts to incorporate critical literacy writing approaches into her classroom in “Critical Literacy and Our Students’ Lives.” Teaching English in a disenfranchised neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, Christensen first describes how her students are labeled as “disadvantaged” by media outlets in the city. Christensen works to dispel this unfavorable moniker and examines her students’ vast skills despite the labels placed upon them. To better explore their abilities, Christensen integrates critical literacy pursuits into the classroom to engage the students by creating a unit where students compose an “unfolding narrative of how racial inequality, displacement, economic disparity, as well as resistance and resilience are currently playing out in their neighborhood,” (p. 18).

As the students participate in this reflective writing process, Christensen works to challenge her students to “talk back” to social, racial, and class inequality and to develop agency as they confront issues such as “racial injustice, class exploitation, and gentrification,” (p. 17). The students infuse their personal narratives into the analysis of major issues, and they were able to read and write with more clarity as they examine the dynamics of the city in which they live.

The reading offers teachers different ways to frame units of study around a central issue. Christensen understands the power of critical literacy and targets specific writing activities to improve her students’ reading and writing competencies within English content. Critical literacy-based writing is an expressive form of communication. Critical literacy writing exercises are presented in many formats that relay meaning from the writer to the intended audience. Christensen pushes her students to compose narratives that speak against stereotypes about their communities, highlight their reactions to the societal inequalities they observe daily, and address their concerns about their neighborhood and community. The intended audience for the students in this reading appears to be the teacher (Christensen) and each other through peer engagement and critique. Students do need feedback and constructive criticism from their instructors and their fellow peers. After they have gone through this process, student writers should have a platform and an audience that reaches beyond the classroom.

The issues students address in their writing should be read and responded to by powerful figures who can help disrupt the false narratives that often present Black people as monolithic. The classroom is a prime environment for young minds to develop their writing prowess to reach wider audiences. My study was interested in expanding the scope and reach of students writing for social change. I created opportunities for students to write critically, and we worked together for the students’ voices to be amplified.

Writing for critical social change must be concerned with investigation of oppressive cycles that should be questioned and challenged. In “Critical Literacy in Teaching and Research,” Janks (2013) presents two questions that guide a framework for critical literacy-based instruction. “How can education contribute to a world in which our students at all levels of education become agents for change?” and “How can we produce students who can contribute to greater equity, who can respect difference and live in harmony with others, and who can play a part in protecting the environment?” (p. 227). Additionally, Janks offers a redesign cycle where teachers and students name, problematize, and rename a societal problem. Janks explores cases where teachers and students can examine critical issues of racism, whiteness, feminism, sexual orientation, critical linguistics, critical pedagogy, soci-cultural, and critical approaches to literacy and critical discourse analysis. In one case, Janks describes how a painting entitled *The Spear* depicts South African king Jacob Zuma with his genitals exposed. Many South African people found the portrait, which was drawn by a White artist, to be offensive. Coinciding with this issue is the subsequent division in South Africa amongst White and Black groups. This division and separation are commonly attributed to language distinctions that affect interactive discourse amongst both groups.

Janks highlights that through analysis of social dynamics such as power and diversity, teachers and students can engage in critical literacy activities that support students to become change agents who tackle serious world issues. Within my study, students examined global issues that affect Black people; however, they were encouraged to specifically tackle the problems they see daily in their local environment. One goal of writing for social change is to engage in praxis-oriented action. One goal of my study was to encourage the students to

participate in praxis activities as they attempted to write for social change and challenge systems to impact their community.

Teacher Collaboration in Action

Student productivity is often the result of quality instruction. Quality instruction is often the result of teacher collaboration and commitment to improving pedagogical practices. The following literature presents stories of educators who understand the power of collaboration to effect student growth. Throughout this section, I make a case that collaboration for criticality is an emergent need in education to enhance student engagement and make the classroom a more relevant and relatable environment.

“Erase the Space” (2018) combines elements of collaboration, critical literacy, and discourse to contribute to activism that dismantles ideologies of segregation and separation. Burtch, who is a 9th grade English teacher at a suburban high school in Columbus, Ohio, believes the English classroom is a prime environment where students can understand “the importance of deliberation and reflexivity, and ultimately how to conduct themselves as a participating communicant,” (p. 29). The collaborative element found in the reading occurs between teachers and students. Burtch collaborates with Amelia Gordon- a colleague who teaches at a nearby urban high school in Columbus. Burtch and Gordon work together to create a writing exchange program where students from each school communicate via social media sites and share personal information with each other about their cultural norms and interests. The program culminates as Burtch states where, “the students meet and create a collaborative solution to the problem of segregation in Columbus,” (p. 31). As the students meet and engage in dialogue with each other, they find commonalities that erase the space of divisive socioeconomic boundaries and color lines.

“Erase the Space” is likened to the goals within my research study. One of the most resonant elements within “Erase the Space” is the discourse students engage in with each other. A key objective in my study was for students to share personal narratives to explore their identity and historicity. Student exploration of identity and historicity are vital pieces of the work we do in critical literacy instruction and writing for critical social change. Much like Burtch and Gordon’s joint initiatives, collaboration is also a formative component of my study. I collaborated with my teacher collaborator for the purposes of impacting student engagement and analyzing how students respond to writing for critical social change. Our collaboration is influential for the construction of curricula and instructional practices. However, unlike the implications found in “Erase the Space,” my study extends discourse and correspondence beyond the classroom setting to reach people in places of power to provoke change.

In “Teacher Collaboration in Instructional Teams and Student Achievement,” Ronfeldt et al. (2015) survey and collect data on over 9,000 teachers in 336 schools in the Miami-Dade Public School System in Miami, Florida. The overarching question that guided the study was, “What kinds of instructional collaborations exist in this large urban district?” 84% of the teachers in the study stated that they were a part of an instructional collaborative group. Over 40% of teachers responded that they found these groups to be “very helpful,” and that development of instructional strategies was influential in the ways teachers structured lessons to best strengthen student growth. Teachers in the study, however, reported that instructional collaboration that focused on state assessment and formative assessment reviews were “less helpful.” Many teachers stated that collaborative sessions positively impacted student engagement and skill retention.

Reading the article and reflecting on my desire for collaboration in my study led me to consider how necessary it is for teachers to collaborate for criticality. The teachers in this study did not find it very helpful when their collaborative planning sessions required them to review state-mandated assessment scores and benchmark data. As a teacher, I believe that constant “teaching to the test” pedagogy is harmful and stifles student development and growth. My study emphasizes teacher collaboration that is structured to enhance student identity development and collaborative efforts that seek to make learning an enriched and relevant experience for all students.

In “Structuring Schools for Teacher Collaboration,” (2002), author Barbara Gideon, who served as the principal of Crockett High School in Austin, TX, explores how schools can cultivate collaborative efforts to best support productive teaching and learning. Gideon’s five tenets for successful school and teacher collaboration include creating a campus leadership team, learning communities, grade-level meetings, department meetings, and cadres. The two areas that resonate most with my research design are the learning communities and cadres. Gideon states that in the learning communities, teachers can “find curricular overlap, share successes, discuss common experiences for students, plan cohesive delivery of instruction, and study student achievement” (p. 32). Within the cadre implementation, teachers work together for the improvement of the overall school. The groups devise plans to mitigate student misbehavior, improve school climate, and identify resources for purposeful staff development.

Working with my teacher collaborator afforded me the opportunity to enhance the collaboration that teachers engage in to influence student achievement and engagement. My teacher collaborator and I combined our interests in social justice and school reform to promote critical literacy-based instruction to incite students to write for critical social change. An

implication within my instructional design is to assess the impact on students and their engagement. The students' response to this critical literacy based instructional design informs continued inquiry into critical literacy and collaboration for criticality.

Enhancing students' school experiences and daily engagement should be a central concern of teachers' collaborative efforts. In "What Collaboration Looks Like," (2017), high school teacher Joseph Vicente describes the effects of the collaborative community at his school East Side Community High School in New York City to strengthen student achievement. Vertical team meetings and roundtable events are two of the hallmarks of the influential collaboration at East Side Community High. In the vertical team meetings, teachers coalesce to "analyze school wide instructional goals, develop common language, reflect on pedagogy, test-drive new lesson ideas, discuss new reads in their subjects, share lesson materials, and collectively design rubrics" (p. 35). Roundtable events are structured to assess both teachers and students. In these collaborative exercises, "students present their choice of best work from each class. Beyond celebrating their work, students must also demonstrate on demand what they have learned throughout the semester" (pp. 35-36). In these events, students' display of mastery directly reflects the collaborative instructional plans of teachers.

"What Collaboration Looks Like" explores how various elements of teaching and learning are impacted through effective teacher collaboration. My research design was organized with a focus on teachers, instructional process, and student writing. My study explored the implications of student impact and responses to instruction. However, the students' level of engagement and involvement was highly predicated upon the collaboration between my teacher collaborator and me as we addressed the three research questions that guided the study.

Discussion of Literature

Each reading throughout the literature review offers clear examples of the power of critical literacy often enacted in spaces that impact students and their criticality development. I focused my literature review on Black student identity development, critical literacy within digital and media representation, writing for social change, and teacher collaboration. These elements are also included in my research study. As I conducted literary research in preparation for my study, I was unable to find abundant examples of critical literacy initiatives and plans that take students' writing beyond the scope of the classroom. Additionally, in my literary research, the literature on Black teachers who collaborate to invoke criticality and critical literacy in ELA classrooms were not prevalent. I want to contribute to emergent research that examines teacher collaboration and criticality with a focus on critical literacy and impact for Black high school students to write for critical social change.

I understand how critical literacy instruction can impact Black high school students' identity development, engagement and motivation in the classroom, and ability to analyze and address societal injustices. Critical literacy instruction is missing in many educational spaces, but as teachers create opportunities for students to engage in criticality development, their voices can be amplified to address issues they are concerned about. Researchers like Morrell, hooks, Muhammad, and Behizadeh have inspired my researcher identity as I seek to expand the influence of critical literacy instruction from classroom curricula to critical social change. The presence of Black teachers committed to pedagogical excellence is instrumental to invoke criticality and sociocultural teaching and learning in classrooms occupied by Black students. My study traces the work of two Black teachers engaged in collaboration and committed to the process of creating curriculum that uplifts the voices of the Black student participants

3 METHODOLOGY

Before developing my research design and methods of data analysis, I thought about my world outlook and my identity as a researcher. I reiterate that my study is rooted in qualitative research guided by constructionist-based epistemology. Learning about various epistemologies has helped me to identify who I am in relation to my research study. Crotty (2003) states, “an epistemology is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p. 3). Developing an epistemological stance helps scholars conceptualize their research interests and guides the data collection process. My research paradigm and epistemology are based in constructionism; my world view and researcher identity directly correlate to constructionism ideology. Crotty states, “Constructionism is the view that all knowledge is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). In my interpretation, constructionism is about the human experience and the realities we construct based on our perspectives, cultural identities, and experiences within the world around us. I align my research paradigm with this epistemology, and I believe it is the most befitting stance for my specific study.

To further highlight the history of constructionism, Crotty explores Clifford Geertz’ (1973) views on this epistemology. Geertz believes, “We inherit a system of significant symbols. When we first see the world in meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through the lenses bestowed upon us by our culture” (p. 54). Ultimately, our cultural practices provide meaning for our daily activities and perspectives. Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2009) state that constructionism’s purpose is “To describe socialization, roles, dialogue, and transformation” (pg. 689). Koro-Ljungberg et al. also state that the main data collection methods in constructionism

include “Group interviews, focus groups, group assignments, and archival materials,” (p. 690).

As a qualitative researcher, I have structured my research design to mirror the ideals of constructionism in conjunction with my theoretical basis. This epistemological stance aligns with my research focus as I worked to construct critical literacy-based instruction with my teacher collaborator. This curricular construction then transitioned to the student participants as they constructed original work that reflected their cultural norms and the meaning they make as we collectively worked to respond to the questions that guided this study.

Research Study Design

The data collection for this study is rooted in three focal points- co constructors/teachers, process/instruction, and product/student artifacts. The co-constructor/teacher data are based on the interview and discussions with my teacher collaborator. The process/instructional data are based on the planning process for teaching and learning that included the instructional and curriculum design we undertook. The product/student artifacts are the students’ weekly writing that was submitted throughout the two units of study.

Table 2, which is located on page 54, outlines the three focal points and specific data points that coincide with the study as I sought information for the question— “What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?” In conjunction with the overarching question, I created additional questions, “What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing instruction?” and “How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?” that correspond to the instructional and student components of the study. The middle section of the chart provides specific information about each element in the focus points, and the final section of the chart provides information for how I collected and

analyzed data throughout the study. I employed case study methodology, Morrell's CCP framework, and Fairclough's (1995) CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis method as a tool for data analysis across the three interconnected focus points. I elaborate on my use of Fairclough's CDA analysis tool in the section entitled Critical Discourse Analysis. Table 2 is below.

Table 2

Research Study Inquiry Table

Research Question and Research Inquiry	Focus Points (Teachers/Instruction/Students)	Data collection and methods of analysis
<u>Teachers/Co-Constructors</u> 1. What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction? a. Analysis of identity, lived experiences, and development as social justice-oriented teachers. b. Exploration of experiences and beliefs of two social justice oriented Black high school teachers	Teachers:	Initial interview prior to instruction- (identity development)
	Co-constructors	
	Identify as Black/African American ELA content background Facilitators	Recorded planning sessions
		Reflections on class sessions
<u>Instructional Process</u> 2. What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum? a. Exploration of curriculum creation in the teaching and learning process. b. Exploration of factors that support or limit their ability to integrate writing for critical social change. (Time constraints, curriculum standards, administrative control)	Instruction:	Analysis of instructional preparation and planning
	Critical literacy Writing and composition intensive Analysis of community and societal inequalities and issues Writing for social change Writing for development of agency and empowerment Sociocultural Learning Theories Critical Composition Pedagogy for curriculum creation	

<u>Students/Writing Artifacts</u>	Students:	Artifacts-
3. How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?	Predominately Black Public high school setting Lower SES population Effects on students/outcomes (praxis; engagement; achievement—writing quality; identity/agency)	Student writing submissions Writing reflections Fairclough’s CDA tool used for writing analysis
a. Exploration of student impact and engagement in critical literacy writing instruction for critical change.		

Research Setting and Participants

My research setting, which is called Literacy High School to protect its anonymity, is a public high school in the metro Atlanta area. Literacy High is populated by 1,327 students. The school receives Title 1 funding and offers college prep diplomas in CTAE (Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education) and Humanities tracks. Demographic data shows that the school has a 92% Black population, 6% Hispanic population, with 1% recognized as White and the final 1% recognized as other. Literacy High has a 75% graduation rate in comparison to the state’s 82% graduation rate. Literacy High has a 19:1 student teacher ratio, and 92% of its teachers have 3 years or more of teaching experience. 69% of the student population resides in low-income households.

The study’s participants consist of my teacher collaborator and her 3rd period 9th grade Advanced Literature and Composition classes. My teacher collaborator’s pseudonym is Ms. G to protect her anonymity. I initially chose Ms. G as my teacher collaborator because of her content focus in English/Language Arts. I also chose to work with Ms. G’s 3rd period class because this class took place during my planning period which allowed me to complete the study during that time. Ms. G identifies as an African American woman in her mid-40s. Ms. G is from Sumter, South Carolina. She graduated from University of South Carolina with a B.A. in English. Ms. G

also attended Georgia State University where she obtained a master's degree in Educational Leadership and Mercer University where she obtained an M.A.T. Ms. G, whose parents were also educators, began her teaching career in 1998.

The student participants in the study identify as African American. There are a total of 13 students in the study. Nine students identify as female and the other four students identify as male. Ms. G provided this demographic information from the student information system at Literacy High School. Along with their parent's permission, Ms. G and I gave the student participants consent/assent forms to sign to confirm their participation in the study. Each student enrolled in the class returned consent/assent forms and participated in the study. Each student is recognized by a pseudonym throughout the study. Students' participation and representation in the data collection is based on Morrell's CCP framework. I analyzed the students' writing artifacts based on how they address historicity, problem posing, dialogism, emancipation, and praxis orientation within the classroom sessions and in their writing. Select students who consistently contribute to the CCP framework are used for coded data analysis.

Additional Research Design and Data Collection Timeline

My research study was conducted over the course of two months from September 2021 to November 2021. Below, I have outlined the timeline for the study that includes discussions with my teacher collaborator, student work objectives, and unit plan goals. Before beginning the study and collecting data to respond to the three focus points, I interviewed my teacher collaborator through a series of questions and prompts about her educational philosophy, her awareness of critical literacy, and we then met to create the plans for the two units of study. My teacher collaborator and I taught together for the purposes of the study. We met to plan the units, reflect on classroom sessions, and examine student writing throughout the study. I initially desired to

gather instructional and student driven data on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout each week of the study. However, due to unforeseen circumstances such as COVID diagnoses and holiday breaks, instruction occasionally had to move to Wednesdays and Thursdays. One instructional day was always used for students to engage in the different reading texts outlined in the curriculum and then complete the writing prompts that coincided with the reading. The second weekday, usually Friday, was used for students to reflect on their positionality for each week's concepts and discourse topics. Students had an opportunity to discuss their thoughts about each week's activities in these reflective exercises.

As stated, I employed Morrell's CCP (2003) framework for lesson planning and activities. All writing prompts challenged students to analyze their historicity by describing their life experiences and how these moments have shaped who they are in relation to the world around them. Students also participated in problem-posing exercises that allow them to examine societal problems and personal struggles they observe and endure that are attributed to issues such as racism and oppression. Through dialogic interaction, students engaged in critical discourse that allowed them to verbally and non-verbally explore pertinent topics. This discourse included topics on discrimination, racism, school climate, police brutality, and stereotypes. In emancipatory-based lessons, we focused on examples of liberation from oppressive cycles in our society. Students also began to outline their own emancipatory arguments. As students wrote for critical social change, they engaged in the praxis of their writing to reflect on curricula that allows them to create action-based agitation and ultimately address societal problems. The following timeline documents the process of beginning and completing my research study:

September 2021: Met with teacher collaborator to engage in conversation about criticality, educational philosophy, curriculum goals, outline of research study, and developing lesson plans.

September 2021: Began consent form process with students for permission to participate in study.

September 2021: Began Unit 1- Developing Critical Consciousness unit of study. Unit 1 lasted over the course of four weeks. Students engaged in activities to describe and examine their neighborhoods, created autobiographical accounts about their lived experiences, analyzed characteristics of their school that promote and/or restrict criticality in learning, and explored meaning and find connections in literature.

Sample Unit 1 Text:

Ferguson, A. A. (2001). *Bad boys: Public schools in the making of Black masculinity*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

October 2021: Met with teacher collaborator to engage in conversation about outline of unit 2 of study and to develop lesson plans.

October 2021: Began Unit 2- Becoming Critical Change Agents unit of study. Unit 2 consisted of four weeks of instruction. Students synthesized the issues and problems they observe in their school and neighborhood and constructed arguments that address these problems to incite positive change. Students were introduced to various action-based compositions and activists who fought for social change as a potential model for their own writing. Unit ended with students and teachers working together to address person in position of power to affect change.

Sample Unit 2 Reading Text:

Satrapı, M. (2003). *Persepolis. The story of a childhood*. Pantheon.

November 2021: Co-constructors reviewed data to evaluate instructional delivery and student artifacts.

Researcher Positionality

Many of my experiences as a child and schoolteacher brought me to my research inquiry. As a child, I fondly remember growing up in a Black community filled with cultural exuberance and ethnic appreciation. My parents ensured that my sisters and I understood and celebrated our heritage through music, literature, spirituality, and unique artistry. Additionally, other areas of my life such as my barbershop and my childhood church strengthened my ancestral awareness with discussions about issues that affected African Americans and the fight for equality and representation. Although I felt safe within my home and validated by the constant cultural representations I saw in my community, many of my early school experiences opposed my sense of self-worth and identity. I remember there was a lack of criticality in my elementary school's curriculum. I never saw myself represented in my textbooks, lessons, or class-based activities. In Kubota's (2019) article on identifying epistemological racism, she states, "In North America, for instance, racial biases in school knowledge becomes evident when we ask, whose culture and views are reflected in teaching history, literacy, language, and art." As a schoolteacher, I intertwine many components of my background to influence the critical stance I have developed both professionally and academically. My critical research focus was to equip Black high school students with tools to become more aware of their communities and critically survey the difficulties and benefits of their surroundings. Within my study, I created instruction that challenged the students to critically assess the world around them, the issues in their community,

and in society. Not only did students write about these issues, but their final writing activity allowed them to tackle structures of power and people with influence by constructing a letter to the mayor of their city. My own criticality has fostered a sense of self-awareness that has driven me to this work. I am also reminded that criticality does not begin and end with me, but criticality is a cyclical process that must be shared and explored with diverse groups of people. It is vital that teachers help students to construct their own sense of criticality.

I was a participant within the research study as I worked alongside my teacher collaborator to collect data and facilitate instruction. Although I was a participant in the study and co-constructed the curriculum, I understood the importance of creating a space where students felt comfortable expressing themselves. I accomplished this by not imposing my thoughts or opinions onto the students during class sessions. Additionally, I was not the teacher of record or the special education teacher for this class. Throughout the research study, I collected data that is reflective of the focus points (teachers, instruction, and students). However, I was actively involved in this data collection process as a member of the study. Through my involvement, I engaged in structured cycles of ongoing inquiry within the two instructional units. These cycles encompassed planning and implementing and then reflecting on that process to begin the process again with greater insight and knowledge. I engaged in this cyclical process throughout each week of the two units of study. As students reflected on critical literacy activities each week, I simultaneously reflected on our instructional practices and assessed the students' responses.

I also considered the importance of the student participants and how their voices will be heard through the research and data collection process. I did not treat the student participants as disposable figures for my personal gain. Each student's participation played a pivotal role in the data collection and analysis process as I was informed by their inclusion in the study. Lawson et

al. (2015) posit that youth should not be included in the study for “token involvement,” but involving youth in the iterative design, implementation, and action of the study “allows for a developmental trajectory where youth gain more voice, choice, and power with each iteration,” (p. 72). Throughout each week of the units of study, students in this study were poised to gain more voice, choice, and power. Also, each cycle allowed each participant to engage in action-based agitation through an iterative process as I sought responses to the questions in the research design.

Critical Discourse Analysis- CDA

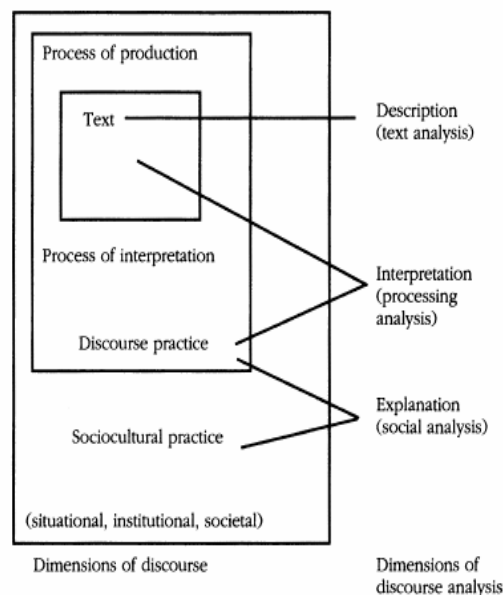
Researching Fairclough’s CDA tool led me to various literature that incorporated this framework in its research design. Within Alford’s (2015) reading, “Critical Discourse Analysis Research Methods for the English Classroom,” she makes the case for employing Critical Discourse Analysis methods as a useful tool for English teachers and researchers. Alford states, “CDA is particularly useful for teachers as it involves making the familiar strange in order to gain fresh insights into our understandings and practice,” (p. 15). I subscribe to Fairclough’s (1995) approach because it combines “modes of interaction, representation, and ways of being,” (pp. 21-22) that echo people’s interaction with the world around them. This approach examines both textual and social relationships and analyzes how discourse and language are displayed and explored in real world situations.

Within this study, I used a specific Fairclough CDA tool for analysis to track the student writing artifacts. Employing Fairclough’s CDA framework requires exploration into textual analysis- description of the grammatical structure and syntax of the actual words that are spoken and/or written, processing analysis- interpretation of what is said and/or written with an emphasis on time and place in conjunction with the situational context of language, and social

analysis- explanation of what is said and/or written to discover perspectives and relationships with power and social dynamics such as racism, oppression, and discrimination. Janks (1997) highlights that in using this specific CDA framework, researchers are prone to “look for patterns that I can use to establish hypotheses about discourses at work in society,” (p. 331). As I used Fairclough’s template to analyze the student writing, I examined their writing to understand how the student participants are impacted by societal and cultural norms. Figure 1 below provides a detailed illustration of the CDA tool.

Figure 1

Fairclough (1995) CDA Chart



Within this study, I used Fairclough’s CDA tool to track the student writing artifacts. As I analyzed the data, I looked for data that correlated to the presence of Morrell’s CCP framework in the students’ writing. I also identified student impact through CDA usage. Fairclough (2001), describes that this form of discourse analysis is concerned with examining,

Ways of acting and organizing or action or ways of relating, interacting through speaking

and writing; as discourses (ways of representing or representation) - as particular ways of representing the world, and as styles (ways of being, one's identity) – particular social or personal identities, (p. 5).

I employed Fairclough's (1995) CDA tool to analyze the student writing artifacts. I did not engage in in-depth analysis of the student writing artifacts with my teacher collaborator- Ms. G. She and I did review the students' work at the end of each unit to reflect on the students' responses throughout each week of the study. However, I wanted to individually analyze the student writing artifacts using the CDA method that I studied and researched to apply to this research study. After I read through the students' artifacts, I categorized their writing based on CDA's textual, processing, and social organizational method. After completing this process, I applied codes and themes that reflect the analysis of the students' discourse based on their responses to instructional prompts, literature, and critical literacy-based activities within the study. Unit 1's codes are **Identity**, **Individuality**, and **School Experiences**. Unit 2's codes are **Action**, **Change**, and **Progress**. Themes were developed based on the students' writing in conjunction with their positionality towards the critical issues we explored. I used Nvivo software to organize the codes and themes for each unit. Further analysis within these data sources revealed student perceptions of the critical literacy-based writing instruction and activities, student perceptions of school climate, the students' relationship to dynamics of power, and their concerns for societal issues such as racism and gender norms. My data analysis is divided into two time periods. After completing the first unit of study in September 2021, I analyzed and coded the data from that specific unit. I then completed the second unit of study in October 2021. I then analyzed and coded the data for the second unit.

With this understanding of CDA in mind, I structured the CDA analysis in the following

format. Table 3 below is an example of student writing analysis from the study.

Table 3

Student Writing Artifact Analysis Chart

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
Aaliyah	A stereotype is a fixed idea about a certain group of people.	People creating single stories based off what they see and thinking that applies everywhere.	The danger is assuming things based on what they saw or heard without the truth. People have a single mindset and judge without knowing fully.

Note- The full application of this table can be found in Chapter 4.

Case Study Methodology

I have employed case study methodology for the study. Throughout this section, I describe the characteristics of case study design and define how I conducted a case study within my research design. Qualitative researchers employ methods of data collection to obtain information that responds to their research inquiries. Methods of data collection include doing observations, conducting interviews, and administering surveys and questionnaires. The data that researchers collect, and their overall study, must be framed in a specific methodology. Crotty (1998) states that methodology is, “The strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes,” (p. 3). Case study is defined by Merriam (1988) as a “Detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event,” (p. 56). Case studies are concerned with investigating a specific location and understanding specific occurrences that take place in this environment. Algozzine and Hancock (2017) define case study research as such,

Case study research typically focuses on an individual representative of a group, an organization(s), or a phenomenon. Second, the phenomenon being researched is studied in its natural context, bounded by space and time. It employs quotes from key participants, anecdotes, and narratives composed from original interviews, (pp. 15-16).

Yin's (2016) definition mirrors that of Algozzine and Hancock. Yin states, "A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident," (p. 15). Yin also states that "case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion," (p. 15). The phenomena that researchers investigate are often found in popular places such as schools, organized settings, and cultural spaces. As researchers collect data and interpret it through the case study, they uncover hidden truths and make revelations that may have gone unnoticed if not examined in this format.

Case studies, as Algozzine and Hancock (2017) point out, are bounded by space and time with studies conducted in a space's natural context. Yin (2016) states that the five important components of case study research design are: "a case study's questions, its propositions, if any, its case, the logic linking the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings," (p. 27). Yin also asserts that when forming the questions that guide your research, you must create "how" and "why" questions as they are "more explanatory and likely to lead to the use of a case study, history, or experiment as the preferred research method," (p. 10). Based on this theory, the research questions support inquiry that tracks processes over time as opposed to frequencies or incidences. The creation of the case study question is a crucial step in the research design process; a researcher must establish this purpose before anything else. The questions for

this study went through a series of iterations before I structured them to support research that is tracked over time with data collection and analysis processed throughout the course of the study. Arriving at the first question, “What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?” has helped me to understand the inductive nature of my qualitative research. The additional research questions, “What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?” and “How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?” have been constructed to best assess the development of my inquiry and research over the two-month study.

Researchers who choose case study methodology must also be aware of the limitations of this design. Maintaining ethical norms as a researcher are extremely important tasks. Ethically, Yin states that researchers must avoid using case studies to substantiate subjectivities, must avoid bias when analyzing data, conduct in-depth analysis that drives the data, and must give sufficient attention to interviewees’ words to avoid misquoting their ideas to propagate preconceived positions. I described my research-based goals throughout the study, and how I was informed by the data I collected. I also discovered in-depth meaning based on the subsequent analysis.

As researchers examine and analyze a phenomenon throughout their case study, their goal becomes to reveal information and details that may be implicit and underlying. In “High School Mathematics Teachers’ Positioning Within the Culture of Blame: A Case Study,” Garner (2019) addresses the issue of high stakes testing and teacher accountability in an underserved high school populated by Black students. Garner’s case study explores the concept of “blame” as mathematics teachers navigate the instructional challenges of student engagement, student achievement, and adherence to school-wide mandates. Garner states,

My research question was best studied using an exploratory case study; my case being a high school mathematics department consisting of six teachers over the course of one school year. Examining participants through a multiple-case study provided the opportunity for a stronger, more in-depth synthesis regarding the culture of blame and its effect on mathematics instruction, (p. 1512).

As Garner describes in her study and as case study research states, researchers who commit to this methodology gain insight into the inner workings of a specific environment, but they must also ensure their involvement in these spaces remains impartial and unbiased to perform this work both ethically and honestly. As stated, my positionality and action research orientation support my ethical and honest participation in this study. Employing case study strengthened my resolve to maintain a moral and unbiased stance in my research.

Remaining true to the tenets of case study methodology, one of my goals was to conduct research that uncovered hidden truths. I endeavored to encourage agency development and propel critical literacy forward in education and in spaces outside of the classroom. The case for this study is defined as “My analysis of criticality and collaboration with Ms. G and her 9th grade literature/composition class.” The case was bound by a two-month timeframe which included Ms. G and the student participants. I believe case study methodology allowed me to accomplish this while remaining objective during this process. Case study methodology also helped me analyze data and identify emergent themes that are representative of a setting and environment that is time bound and situated in a real-world context. More specifically, I view my study as a single longitudinal case study. Within this design, researchers are interested in observing and collecting data on the theory of interest and “how certain conditions and their underlying processes change over time,” (p. 51). I collected data and sought responses to the questions,

“What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?” “What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?” and “How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?” I observed the impact of these questions and the impact of constructed instruction and curricula over the course of two four-week learning units. Throughout these two four-week periods, I notated any changes and impressions that the research design had on the participants and the focus points. I gained insight and knowledge from that data to re-enter the classroom each week with clarity to transition to the next learning target with deeper meaning and ways to best incorporate criticality in the classroom.

Ericsson (2016) highlights that the school setting is a key location to conduct a case study. He (2016) states,

Case studies are often used to shed light on a contemporary educational policy or condition, disrupt commonly held historical beliefs about education by presenting counter narratives through particular cases, examine the educational development of a particular place and/or to interrogate the regional distinctiveness of educational development, (p. 115).

Spending most of my life in schools as either a student or teacher, I am extremely interested in the ways teachers construct curriculum to impact student growth. In turn, I am mutually interested in how students respond to instruction that is positioned in criticality and critical literacy development. I believe teaching and learning is a real-world phenomenon with a myriad of contexts that can be studied and researched through a time-bound study. As previously stated, the data collection methods for the study included observations, reflective conversations,

planning sessions, and student writing artifacts. Collecting the data, reflecting on its meaning and implications through a case study, informed my scholarship and contributed to the outcomes that corresponded to the research inquiry. A major component of case study inquiry is analysis of questions and responses that are gathered during the data collection process. Throughout Chapter 4, I review and analyze various implications that came directly from the interview and discussions between my teacher collaborator and me. I also explain the boundaries of this case study in Chapter 4. Additionally, this study was conducted over a two-month time frame from September 2021 until November 2021. The location was solely at Literacy High School in Ms. G's classroom with the student participants as the primary focus for data analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis, Case Study Methodology, and Critical Literacy

I developed the methodology for my research design by incorporating case study methodology and CDA methods to synthesize the data I collected. When case study methodology is paired with a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach, data analysis can produce robust and thematic results. CDA's examination of language and social interaction can strengthen the purposes within research positioned in case study methodology. As Erickson (2016) asserted, case studies disrupt common beliefs and shed light on various conditions. A pivotal component of CDA is to explore underlying meaning with discourse. CDA and case study methodology work in tandem to deconstruct narratives and make meaning of the intricacies within a specific space.

Throughout this scholarship, I have learned how research tools can work together to amplify research inquiry and investigation. The features of case study methodology, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and critical literacy are frameworks that serve to enhance the research I am invested in. Each area allows researchers to examine dynamics of power, politics, culture,

and social interaction and how these dynamics affect various groups of people. Rogers (2004) states, “Schools, classrooms, and literacy practices have been looked to as sites for studying not only the micro-dimensions of classroom talk, but also how social structures are reproduced at a macro-level,” (p. 19). With awareness that CDA “uncovers power relationships and societal inequities,” (Rogers, 2004), I hope my research and analysis contribute to ongoing inquiry into critical educational research that enhances the voices of Black high school students.

Understanding my stance as a qualitative researcher (Bogdan et al., 2016) (DeWalt et al., 2011) has helped me pinpoint my specific study and choose data collection methods that best respond to the study. Identifying the methodology that aligns with my interests has provided structure for my ongoing scholarship (Crotty, 1998) (Yin, 2016). Finally, selecting a method of data analysis is a necessary task within research development; thorough and succinct data analysis contributes to successful synthesis of the data and information (Fairclough, 1995, 2001) (Gee, 1996) (Janks, 1997). When each of these components is woven together, salient discoveries are made, and research inquiries are fulfilled (Junker, 1960).

4 FINDINGS

To begin this chapter, I review the research questions that guided my research inquiry. The research questions are:

1. What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?
2. What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?
3. How are Black high school students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?

Below, I explore the findings and responses to each of these separate research questions through the various data sets such as the interview, planning sessions, and student work artifacts found throughout the data collection process.

Research Question #1 Themes

I identified themes following our interview that highlight and emphasize important moments that resonate with me and respond to the first research question. The themes are:

1. Origin Stories
2. Legacy
3. Religion
4. Inspiration
5. Student Acknowledgement
6. Race Relations

Origin Stories is the first theme because I learned critical and key information that is intrinsic to Ms. G's background in South Carolina. Ms. G's origin story is like mine in many

ways from our family similarities to our interests. The second theme, Legacy, refers to the history Ms. G and I share as children of teachers. We have continued this tradition by becoming teachers and joining a legacy of educators within our family. Religion is the next theme. Ms. G's and my identification as Christians is embedded in our identities. The decisions we make and our interactions in the world are guided by a desire to honor and please God. The theme of Inspiration is essential to both Ms. G and me. Outside of our parents' influence, teachers like Dr. Sellers and Dr. Abel helped us understand how teachers can impact you when they tap into the issues and topics that are relative to your life. They inspired the way we operate as teachers and the way we treat our students. I created Student Acknowledgement as a theme because through our conversation it became clear that Ms. G and I are mindful of acknowledging and validating our students' lived experiences. We purposely include their cultural and social norms in our classroom to engage our students and remind them how much we care about them. The final theme is Race Relations. As teachers of predominantly Black students, we are emphatic about exploring the history of racism in this country and exposing our students to Black authors who discuss the experiences of Black people in this world and how they use prose to describe the totality of our existence.

I now present the interview data that coincides with the themes I identified from this data set. I also provide thorough analysis of my discussion with Ms. G.

Exploration of Identity and Beliefs

In describing case study analysis techniques, Yin (2016) discusses the significance of the questions that make up the research design. He states, "You might start with questions rather than with the data. Start with a small question first and then identify your evidence that addresses the question" (pg. 166). The collaboration I engaged in with Ms. G centered around constructing

and implementing curriculum that provided opportunities for Black high school students to engage in critical literacy-based instruction. A major focus of my first research question includes analysis of identity, lived experiences, professional development, and the exploration of our experiences and beliefs as two social justice oriented Black high school teachers. I believe various intricate and pivotal memories in our lives contribute to our identities and passions. There are foundational experiences that have drawn Ms. G and me to this work as Black teachers who strive to make the classroom a more culturally and socially aware space. I interviewed Ms. G on Thursday, September 2, 2021, to better understand her background and orientation to the work of social justice-based instruction. We engaged in two interviews- one at the beginning of the study on September 2, 2021, and one at the end of the study on November 19, 2021, to reflect on the entire eight-week process. Ms. G and I also engaged in two planning discussions/sessions on September 20, 2021, and October 20, 2021, to plan two instructional units. Below, I analyze data from these interviews and discussions. I created tables including questions and abbreviated responses from my interview. Although I did not respond to interview questions during the actual interview, I include my personal life experiences in juxtaposition to Ms. G's responses to highlight our similarities and differences in relation to our various identities. I then provide a narrative analysis of the data after the table. I also provide themes that reflect interview responses.

As stated, Ms. G did not interview me. However, I provide my own responses to the questions and prompts that I posed to Ms. G. I gained a better understanding of Ms. G's upbringing and values throughout our first interview. I discovered we have many shared characteristics from our upbringing, religious affiliation, and commitment to social justice-based

teaching and learning. Table 4 below explores the insight from this discussion (see Table 4 below.).

Table 4

Teacher Collaborator Interview

Interview Question	Ms. G's Response	My Personal Experiences
What was it like growing up in Sumter, South Carolina?	"I realize how country it was. I had a normal upbringing, I come from a two-parent household."	Decatur, GA. Suburban area/ Black families.
What attributes and characteristics define your life?	"I love Jesus. First and foremost, he is everything to me"	I am a Christian. Treat others how I want to be treated.
What is your teaching philosophy?	"All students can learn, but students will not learn from someone who they feel doesn't care about them."	Support students based on their needs academically and personally.
What motivated you to become a teacher?	"House filled with educators. My mother and my father are both retired math teachers, high school math teachers."	My mother taught 12 th grade English for over 30 years. She really loved her career.
Did you have any teachers leave a mark on you?	"I had teachers who I remember them because I could tell that they cared about us."	Dr. Abel influenced the work I do.

Ms. G and I are extremely grounded by our faith. Our families also play an integral role in our lived experiences, and our familial ties contribute to our chosen profession. Ms. G stated, "Every day I would come home, and I would listen to them (her parents) tell stories about their classrooms. And then I have three older sisters. All of them became math teachers as well. And it got to a point where everybody was at home in the afternoon talking about their classrooms and what happened with their kids. And I wanted to have my own story to tell." When I reflect on my upbringing, I remember how fulfilled my mother was as an English teacher who taught for over 30 years. She made deep connections with her students beyond the classroom. She inspired them to pursue their dreams of becoming fashion designers, professional dancers, and even teachers.

Like Ms. G, I was motivated by this example, and I also wanted “my own stories to tell” with my future students.

Our shared religious belief as Christians serves as the foundation for our daily decisions and choices. Ms. G stated, “I try to my hardest to do what will be pleasing to Him (Jesus).” As a Christian, I am guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ. One essential guideline in my faith is to treat other people how I want to be treated. This rule has transitioned into the work I do as a teacher. I seek to be empathetic, kind, and considerate towards my students and their needs as they mature from adolescents into young adults. Subsequently, Ms. G’s and my role as educators extends beyond the classroom as we strive to remind our students that we are concerned about their total well-being. When I asked Ms. G about her teaching philosophy, she said, “All students can learn, but students will not learn from someone who they feel doesn't care about them. So, my first goal is to let the students know that I care. And I do that by attempting to make a connection with them. I ask them, how are you doing? What type of music you listen to? What's your mama’s name?” My teaching philosophy is to reach students by acknowledging their life experiences and including their interests into the curriculum to help them access and comprehend classroom content. I accomplish this goal by creating moments for students to share what is important to them and how key moments in their lives have impacted them. I also incorporate authors and activities into the classroom that reflect their community, their history, and their racial identification. Ms. G and I work to be selfless teachers who affirm our students, and as she said, “Let the students know that I care.” This dedication to our profession aligns with our religious convictions. We honor our religious principles as we show concern and care for our students’ mental, social, and emotional health. Making personal connections with students is a key component in critical literacy-based classroom. I also align with that teaching philosophy,

and our social-justice orientation is reflective of the principles of sociocultural teaching and learning. If Morrell's (2003) CCP framework is to be effective, teachers must be emphatic about cultivating relationships with their students that extend beyond the curriculum and objectives. Additionally, Ginwright's (2004) research in Afrocentric reform and urban education highlights African-centered education with precepts that guided Black students' educational experiences with the statement, "Optimal or maximum learning takes place when knowledge, knowing, and the knower are culturally connected. Effective teaching and learning will be characterized by cooperation and mutuality," (pg. 82).

Ms. G and I share many similarities that contribute to our career paths as teachers. As I interviewed her, I found out that she and I also identify as social justice-oriented teachers. This social justice orientation is highly attributed to the instruction of our college professors. When I asked about how her teachers impacted her, Ms. G stated, "I laugh, and I say that I didn't really start my education until my junior year of college with Dr. Cleveland Sellers. He's a huge historical figure in South Carolina. I don't know if you've ever heard of the Orangeburg massacre, but he was a part of that. The only Black person to get arrested during that time. He was later pardoned by the Governor. But he was a teacher. He was my professor, African American history professor at the University of South Carolina. He made a huge impact in my life because I had always loved African American history. And I finally found what I was looking for in his class. Huge impact. I graduated in 1998, and we are still connected today." I recall my graduate school professor, Dr. Abel, as a key figure in my desire to push social justice instruction. Dr. Abel is a Black woman, born in the 1960s, who ensured that we learned about pervasive racial inequities in the American school system. She often discussed how opportunity is tied to access and achievement, and that many of the Black students I taught in Baltimore were

not incapable of achievement. They were often at a disadvantage because of the extensive and oppressive systems that hindered their progress. I continue to apply this realization in my current teaching practice as I work to infuse critical literacy, socio-cultural norms, and social justice instruction into my classroom. Teachers like Dr. Sellers and Dr. Abel helped Ms. G and me understand the dynamics of race relations in our country, and they strengthened our desire to serve our population of students. For Ms. G, Dr. Sellers was social justice in action. The Orangeburg massacre occurred in February of 1968 when multiple Black college students at South Carolina State University spoke out against segregated establishments in their community. Police responded to their protests by shooting and killing three Black male students and injuring over 20 students. Dr. Sellers was arrested and sentenced for his involvement in the protests, but as Ms. G mentioned, “He was later pardoned by the Governor.” Ms. G received instruction from a figure who literally fought for Civil Rights during a time of immense racism, and that relationship encouraged her interests in African American studies. I note that she said, “I didn’t really start my education until my junior of college with Dr. Cleveland Sellers.” Dr. Sellers’ instruction was so impactful that Ms. G cites his class as the true inception of her real learning experience. This assertion contributes to the notion that teachers can empower their students when they tap into their interests, discuss real world issues, and share their own lived experiences to create community in the classroom.

I learned about Ms. G’s spirituality, inspirations to become a teacher, her teaching philosophy, and how an influential teacher impacted her as a student and burgeoning teacher. As we continued our conversation, I learned more about Ms. G’s perspectives on education and elements of her instructional style which also align with social justice and socio-cultural

connectivity. Table 5 below includes interview questions, an excerpt of Ms. G's response, and my personal experiences that I added after the interview.

Table 5

Teacher Collaborator Interview

Interview Question	Ms. G's Response	My Personal Experiences
What are your thoughts on the ELA high school curriculum and its connection to the students you teach?	"The high school curriculum is outdated."	Most of the texts and unit tasks do not relate to the students I teach.
Incorporating some more of those relevant contemporary writers as you stated, how do you think that would impact teaching and learning?	"It would make the students more engaged if they are reading about people who look like them."	Students are more interested in reading and writing what is interesting to them.
Are you familiar with critical literacy? And can you explain what you know about critical literacy?	"I immediately thought about critical race theory."	Institutions of power highlight Black people to help validate their lived experiences.

I asked Ms. G about her thoughts on the high school English/Language Arts curriculum she and I are required to teach. She stated, "I think the high school curriculum is outdated because the canon is still very much a part of our education system. We're expected to teach William Shakespeare. We're expected to teach these typical writers that you always hear about. But there are so many other writers and people who have made an impact in English literature that the students should know about, more contemporary people that are writing about issues that concern our students. The school that I work at, our school is 92% African American, I think, and 5.5% Hispanic, so they don't really care about William Shakespeare, to be perfectly honest. I

love Shakespeare, but I would like to have the freedom to include more contemporary relevant writers to our curriculum.” I completely agree with Ms. G. There is a clear distinction in the student population and the curriculum we are required to teach as English/Language Arts teachers. There have been modifications to make 12th grade English curriculum more ethnically diverse in our school district. However, 9th through 11th grade literature still includes majority canonical texts that the students “don’t really care about.” I also note that Ms. G said she would like to have “the freedom to include more contemporary relevant writers into the curriculum.” We are committed to supporting our students through literature and instruction that liberates them, but we as teachers should also feel liberated in our practice. Having more freedom and autonomy in our classrooms would remove the stifling and restrictive structure of our current system of teaching and learning. With this freedom, we could be more exploratory and diversified in our literary choices with our students.

I then asked Ms. G about her thoughts on the implications for students if we had the liberty to implement more culturally relevant texts into the classroom. She stated, “I think it would make the students more engaged if they are reading about people who look like them, and if they are reading authors who look like them, because I don't even know if you know that I've written six books, I'm a published author. So, when I tell them that at the beginning of the year, it's only because I want them to know like, hey, I look like you and I'm a writer just like these people who you're reading in the textbook. So, if that's your desire, you can be a writer too.” I think it makes a difference to the students when they can relate more to what they're reading. It increases their engagement for sure.” I align with Ms. G’s perspective, and her sentiments are closely related to what drew me to the work of social justice and critical literacy instruction. It is important for Black students to see themselves in spaces of power and influence. There are an

abundance of Black authors and scholars who have contributed to the literary landscape. However, their work is often missing from public school curricula. Further exploring her response, I also found a parallel between the inspiration Ms. G received from Dr. Sellers, and the work she does as a teacher. Ms. G is intentional about letting her students know that she is a published author because it is important for her predominately Black students to know that a Black woman has accomplished this feat. Ms. G understands how revealing this to her students can inspire them to pursue a similar dream much like the motivation she received from Dr. Sellers.

Social justice-based instruction and the core of my research are rooted in critical literacy instruction. As previously mentioned, critical literacy initiatives should be structured to agitate societal uniformity, propel students to analyze and address sociocultural, sociopolitical, and sociohistorical contexts, and create opportunities for students to blend reading of words and reading the world to make the world a more equitable place. Reflecting on Ms. G's definition of critical literacy shows that she had some uncertainty about its meaning. However, she did make a connection between critical race theory and critical literacy. When asked about critical literacy, she stated,

“When you said critical literacy, I immediately thought about critical race theory, so I might be thinking about critical race theory. But what I know about critical race theory is basically the theory or the idea that racism exists in our country, in our world. And these are the reasons that it exists. So, it's teaching students or it's teaching people to have an accurate history.”

Through this response, Ms. G made a correlation between the two concepts of critical race theory and critical literacy. Critical race theory emphasizes the concept of race with a need to discuss

and expose issues such as white privilege, racism, microaggressions, and implicit biases (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through CRT-based instruction, teachers and students engage in meaningful dialogue that unpacks systemic issues that have existed in this country from its inception to the current day. The tenets of CRT are embedded within my study because the curriculum Ms. G and I created supports students as they explore and address issues such as racism and how these problems affect them. CRT also aligns with the principles of critical literacy instruction as critical literacy is concerned with examining these same issues in conjunction with culture and identity. Hearing Ms. G make the connection between CRT and critical literacy helped me understand her awareness of these shared frameworks. I also note that when she said, “it’s teaching people to have an accurate history,” regarding issues such as racism, she understood how necessary it is for students and people everywhere to know the truth about the history of racism and bigotry. I believe if we intentionally teach our students about the critical and social issues that exist then our students are informed, and they become inspired to speak out against these issues and inform others. Ms. G’s and my shared beliefs about having sociopolitical conversations in the classroom was essential as we planned and implemented criticality-focused learning units.

Instructional Process

My second research question, “What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?” emphasizes the collaborative instructional efforts Ms. G and I undertook throughout the study. Question two is concerned about the process we engaged in as we created the curriculum. I wanted to discuss Ms. G’s thoughts about teacher collaboration and her process for creating lessons before we began

creating this study's curriculum. This information was useful as I sought information for how Ms. G lesson plans and her thoughts on teacher collaboration. Table 6 is below.

Table 6

Teacher Collaborator Interview

Interview Question	Ms. G's Response	My Personal Experiences
How do you prepare and plan the lessons for your specific content?	"I hate standards. What piece of literature can I fit into this?"	I think about ways I can make the standard engaging for my students.
What does the concept of teacher collaboration mean to you?	"We are a professional learning community. My personal issue with that is, honestly, I found that I work much better alone."	Sometimes these PLC meetings feel forced and consume too much of the school day.

During this conversation, I learned that Ms. G and I differ in our use of standards to guide our lesson planning. Ms. G does not like the rigidity of the ELA standards, but she understands their purpose. I enjoy using the standards to structure and guide my lesson plans. Although we have different opinions about using the standards, we both strive to make our classrooms engaging and relevant for our students as we adhere to curriculum mandates. Ms. G specifically said, "I look at the standards since we have to teach the standards. I look at the standard and I say, what piece of literature can I fit into this to make it interesting for me and make it interesting for the kids? So that's really what I do. I want them to remember Langston Hughes and know who Langston Hughes is. I want them to remember the authors and the writers and make a connection with the time that they lived and why they wrote the things that they wrote." Like Ms. G, I want my lessons to be relevant and interesting for the students. I think it is important for the students to read literature from key authors like Langston Hughes who wrote about issues

that represent the time in which he lived yet mirror many of the struggles within the Black experience today.

Unlike Ms. G, I dissect and analyze the ELA standards to truly get an idea of the creation of the content and skills for my content area. Ms. G and I have different perspectives on the ELA content standards. Ms. G and I did not use ELA content standards to coincide with the curriculum creation. However, the following standards informed the curriculum and units of study: **ELAGSE9-10RI3** Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. **ELAGSE9-10W3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. The first standard is reading focused. This standard relates to our curriculum because the student participants were encouraged to analyze what we read throughout each week, identify various critical ideas and concepts such as racism and identity, and make connections to their own lives and experiences based on the texts. The second standard is writing focused. This standard relates to our curriculum because the student participants were encouraged to compose narrative sketches throughout Unit 1 and 2 that include specific details about their identity, experiences, interests, and concerns.

In my discussion with Ms. G, she stated she prefers working alone, but she understands the efficacy of professional learning communities. She mentioned,

It means that we are a professional learning community. And studies have shown that we learn best from one another, from working with people. My personal issue with that is, honestly, I found that I work much better alone. My anxiety doesn't allow me to think in a large group of people like, I can't function. I can't comprehend things when I have a lot of

people around me. I have to sit back and think about what I want to do and how I want to move forward. But because we are expected to work in groups of people, I certainly do that. I have a great team that I work with, and I do learn from them.

As a teacher, the professional learning community (PLC) is difficult to avoid. Much like Ms. G, I understand how purposeful teacher collaboration can be when teachers are united and work towards shared goals. Ms. G's stated anxiety hinders her functioning capacity in collaborative sessions. I often feel like professional learning sessions are boring and do not provide practical tools to support effective teacher collaboration to best reach today's students. I do not enjoy constantly discussing district mandates for test deadlines and excessive benchmark administrations. Riveros et al. (2012) assert that PLCs have been "formulated in an era of accountability and high-stakes testing when student achievement has been posited as a critical indicator of educational systems' performance," (pg. 605). As a teacher who regularly attends PLC sessions, I often contend with learning sessions that focus on preparing students for high-stakes testing. I feel most accomplished as a member of collaborative PLCs when we are allowed to brainstorm and discuss ways to implement our content with culturally competent and relevant reading tools and correlated tasks. I also feel most successful in these spaces when we discuss and share various ways we can engage with students about the social, political, and cultural issues that are relative to their life and the society in which we all exist. I believe that a restructured focus on instrumental ways to incorporate the students' lived experiences and cultural interests into the classroom would allow for increased engagement. Once we have engaged them and made classroom content relative and relevant, we can then transition into additional instructional goals.

Again, I created additional themes following this portion of our interview to highlight and emphasize important moments. These themes are Inclusive Instruction and Professional Expectations. Inclusive Instruction is a theme derived from Ms. G's and my desire to make instructional choices that affirm our students' cultural backgrounds. We also strive to create relevant and relative lessons that speak to our students' diverse realities and interests. As both an ELA and Special Education teacher, I also ensure that various modalities and differentiated tasks are a part of my instruction to successfully reach my exceptional education population. The next theme is Professional Expectations. During our discussion, Ms. G described how she adheres to both the school district's requirements and the requirements of our school's administration. It is mandatory we use standards to create our lesson plans, and we must participate in our school's Professional Learning Community (PLC) sessions. However, there is a bit of tension there; Ms. G and I know we have professional expectations to uphold as teachers, but we still find ways to navigate through these expectations in hopes of having some sort of autonomy as teachers. For me, this navigation is explored by including literature I think the students would enjoy or creating my own assessments that are not included in the prescribed common assessments. This tension is even more palpable in our current educational climate. Government sanctions and laws are being created throughout the country to silence the efforts of teachers who are social justice minded and who incorporate criticality in their daily instruction. As teachers who oppose this interference, Ms. G and I planned units of study that advocate for social justice and critical literacy teaching and learning in today's classroom. The following section documents our planning process for these units of study.

Unit 1 Planning Process

After my initial interview with Ms. G, we transitioned into discussing the first unit of study and the planning process. On Monday, September 20, 2021, Ms. G and I met to construct plans for Unit 1. I came to the session with an outline and title for the overarching objective of the plan. Throughout each unit of study, I came to our collaborative sessions with specific ideas and activities that I wanted to include in each week's lessons. Ms. G would then add to this outline by including her thoughts and ideas for the tasks and readings students would complete. Our planning session data encompasses some of the plans we executed throughout each week, and the planning session data also encompasses some ideas that were not implemented in the units of study.

I titled the first unit, "Developing Critical Consciousness." The unit's focus was structured to create opportunities for the Black high school student participants to critically reflect on their upbringing, examine how their cultural norms and traditions have impacted their outlook and perspectives, and explore criticality in conjunction with their varied representations. Through criticality development and exploration of their identity, the student participants were incited to consider the tensions that are created by their lived experiences and cultural norms. In my planning discussion with Ms. G, I mentioned that during this unit, students will be encouraged to engage in metacognitive processing to consider who they are in the world, what is valuable to them, and how their lived experiences affect the present and potentially influence the future. The following transcription depicts our Unit 1 planning session conversation. The transcription shows the planning session date, planning ideas that we discussed, and Ms. G's responses for each week of planning. Throughout the following transcription, I interject analysis of key lines that address the mission of the unit and provide insight for the second research

question. The first excerpt I share below describes my idea for the students to learn about and discuss the concept of stereotypes. A part of Ms. G's response below highlights her willingness to give me more time to implement the lesson despite the lesson she would teach after I left for that day.

Brooks: Stereotypes for the students that they believe are placed on them and their peers, how they make you feel, who do you think places labels on you and your peers?

Ms. G: I don't mind if you need more time, though. I just don't know if the students will complete it in the time, before lunch.

Time logistics was one of the biggest considerations in this planning process. I was not allotted the entire period to work with the students because they had other coursework to complete for their actual English class. However, Ms. G knew some of the assignments might extend beyond the study session. I did not always consider the limitations of time as we planned lessons and activities. Having Ms. G think about this important factor of time helped us to plan more efficiently to ensure the weekly tasks and activities were concise and succinct. I also felt like our collaboration would be successful because she generously shared her class time with me and reminded me that she did not mind if I needed more time to complete the activities and tasks within each unit. The excerpt below describes my instructional ideas for week two. Ms. G then responds with her thoughts on this idea for week two.

Brooks: So with week two, the book is titled *Bad Boys*. I wanted to have students read and write about some of the issues and problems they have noticed in their school, thinking about some things that are important to them.

Ms. G: I like week two, because that gives them -- anytime the kids have to write about what's going on with them or anything that's affecting their immediate life, they do very

well. So, I think that will be good for them to talk about what's been happening in the school.

Ms. G agreed with my idea about the students examining school related issues. Ms. G's push to include this idea speaks to how she values relatable instructional practices that engage students. I also appreciate that she said, "they do very well" regarding tasks that encourage them to address relative issues. Teachers must observe students' responses to in-class activities to best accommodate their academic needs. It is incumbent upon us to continue creating engaging and relatable activities when we notice our students "do very well" on these types of assignments and encourage them to expand that inquiry. Then, I asked Ms. G about her thoughts on what we should teach for weeks three and/or four. Ms. G responded with suggestions for what to read and how specific activities could be engaging for the students.

Brooks: But I also wanted to get your thoughts on anything if you thought maybe weeks three or four?

Ms. G: There's a poem by Nikki Giovanni about how one of the lines in it says, and I hope no white person ever writes about me because they'll never understand. And then she talks about dad and her mom and the fact that even though they were poor, they were still very happy.

Brooks: So possibly Nikki Giovanni text. That's great, I love the inclusion of the poetry, because it's such a great way for them to kind of connect to certain ideas. I was thinking about doing and what I wanted to do was have an activity where they identify an item that is sentimental to you, a sentimental value, where there's like something your parents have given you or an elder in your family, something may be passed down that has value to you and why.

Ms. G: It gives the kids a chance to talk about themselves and understand because they all have the ideas about each other but bringing the stuff in and talking about it will help them maybe change their minds about whatever prejudices they hold or whatever.

There are two points derived from the above transcript I want to explore here. Ms. G upholds her desire to incorporate authors of color in the curriculum by mentioning the potential implementation of Nikki Giovanni in the unit. Giovanni's poetry often depicts the ups and downs of the Black experience. We did not include Giovanni in the unit, but the unit's literature came from Black authors and orators who explore the Black experience both past and present. Throughout the section above, Ms. G highlights the concept of dialogism found in Morrell's CCP framework. I brought up the idea of the students participating in a "show and tell" type activity. Ms. G said this would allow the students to learn from each other and possibly break down some preconceived barriers they have amongst each other. I believe the concept of emancipation is also found here. If students learn from each other, they may also learn to appreciate the differences amongst their peers, find some commonalities with their peers, and understand the diversity in their peer group should be celebrated and supported. The following transcript details my ideas for week four's activities. Ms. G responded by expanding the scope of what the students could do for week 4.

Brooks: I was thinking with week four, have them do, like a "community walk." And then what are some things you notice just around your neighborhood that you maybe like, you don't like, that stand out to you, things that you feel like could possibly change or even in your school, you know what I'm saying?

Ms. G: Their neighborhood, maybe we can give them a choice between doing their neighborhood or school or an organization maybe they play a Little League or something, I don't know. Think about something in your life that you might want to change.

In the excerpt above, I start by focusing on problem-posing and praxis. Encouraging students to reflect on issues in their neighborhood and surrounding areas could push them to acknowledge these problems and work to eradicate them. Ms. G responded favorably to this idea, but she wanted to include choice options for the students. She brought in her knowledge of her students and her commitment to student choice as additional considerations, which strengthened the curriculum. In another example of how we collaborated below, I suggested a writing activity and Ms. G expanded on my suggestion again.

Brooks: They are going to write about it. So in-class activity is writing about it, describing it, what do you notice?

Ms. G: Maybe they can make a poster about what they want to change, just do, like – I mean it could just be on a sheet of typing paper or computer paper but maybe this is the problem I see, and this is how I want to change it.

In the response above, Ms. G suggests bringing in multimodality for the study. It is important to consider student autonomy and self-expression as we advocate for social justice to enhance criticality and engagement in the classroom. It is necessary to give students opportunities to express themselves in a myriad of ways. Through this autonomy, students can be inspired to take ownership of their work and be proud of what they submit. In the previous two examples, Ms. G considers how writing for critical social change must be rooted in activating agency. Students' agency can be groomed when they are constantly allowed to freely express themselves.

Unit 1 Implementation

Next, I provide a unit chart that documents Unit 1's plans and outlines implementation dates, objectives, activities, and readings for each week. I came up with the session objectives for each week. Ms. G introduced the *Punching the Air* (2020) text, and I picked the specific chapter from the book to include in the activities. Ms. G also introduced and decided to include the multimodality-based assignment in the study. On the next page, table 7 details the product from our co-planning session.

Table 7

Unit 1 Instructional Plan

Session & Date	Session Objectives	In-Class Activities
Unit 1: Developing Critical Consciousness		
Week 1: September 21, 2021	Students will be introduced to dangers of “single stories” and analyze the impact of stereotypes on Black people.	Students will view excerpt of TED Talk “Dangers of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie. After video, students will complete writing prompt. Teachers review the definition of stereotype. <u>Writing Prompt:</u> After video, describe any stereotypes that you believe are placed on you and your peers. Students then discuss stereotypes they contend with and their thoughts around concept.
Week 2: September 28, 2021	Students will explore their feelings and thoughts about their high school experience by reading and analyzing case study text about school climate and culture.	Reading- <i>Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity</i> (2001) by Anne Arnette Ferguson. After reading excerpt from “Getting In Trouble” chapter, students will respond to prompt: -How does your school experience make you feel?
Week 3: October 5, 2021	Students will identify and describe an item they possess that holds sentimental value after	Reading- <i>I, Too</i> (1926) by Langston Hughes and excerpt from <i>Punching the Air</i> (2020) by Yusef Salaam. Students

	reading and examining autobiographical prose.	will identify and describe an item of sentimental value. "Show and tell"
Week 4: October 12, 2021	Students will create autobiographical sketch about a critical moment in their life after listening to music selection and reading autobiographical literature.	Listen to "Dear Mama" (1995) by Tupac and read excerpt from <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> (1969) by Maya Angelou. Students create autobiographical sketch.

As previously mentioned, each week's activities centered around Morrell's CCP framework. Unit 1 focused on the dialogism and historicity components of the framework. For the first week's activities, the students viewed Chimamanda Adichie's "Single Story" Ted Talk video to better understand the harmful effects of stereotypes and mis-labels. Students then engaged in an activity where they described the stereotypes that society has placed on them based on who they are and what they represent. During this activity, Ms. G and I discussed the definition of stereotypes, and we provided examples of stereotypes that are often placed on Black people such as "All Black people eat fried chicken," and the Asian stereotype, "All Asian people are good at math." Within the discussion on stereotypes, students explored different stereotypes that are placed on them such as "All Black teenagers are criminals." The student participants explained how misconceptions can feel stifling because people often judge them based on what they see as opposed to getting to know them personally. As teachers who are intentional about creating social justice-based instruction, Ms. G and I made sure the students had this specific outlet to delve deeper into the injustice of stereotypes and their personal experiences. CCP tenets of historicity and dialogism are found in this week's activity. Historicity and dialogism provide students with opportunities to reflect on and discuss their lived experiences in the world. Also, through dialogism, students can talk about critical issues that are relevant to them in a safe and welcoming environment. Unit 1 began with the topic of stereotypes because we wanted the

students to understand that we were concerned about their representation in the world, and we wanted them to have a space to think about the labels they contend with as teenagers, students, and Black individuals.

Ms. G and I wanted to continue to create moments for students to continually explore their lived experiences and the instances in their lives that contribute to their development. Moving forward into unit 1, the student participants had additional opportunities to engage in historicity and dialogism-based instruction. For weeks two through four, students explored and discussed their feelings about their high school experience, they participated in a “show and tell” activity that allowed them to bring a sentimental item they possess and describe its value in their life, and they composed original poems, stories, and illustrations about pivotal moments in their lives. They identified how critical these items have been in their development and the people, such as family, who are instrumental in their development. Ms. G and I crafted this lesson to help the students make connections to the intrinsic moments in their past that contribute to their identity in the present. Through this activity, students were positioned to consider how foundational cultural experiences help shape our world outlook and perspective. As stated, we were influenced and informed by the following ELA reading and writing standards in our curriculum construction:

ELAGSE9-10RI3 Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them. **ELAGSE9-10W3** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Throughout Unit 1's four weeks, Ms. G and I were able to better understand the students' interests and cultural background. I highlight students' responses to these activities and tasks in the student writing analysis section. Ms. G and I wanted to help the students explore many of the social issues and racial tensions that are still prevalent today as we read texts such as Langston Hughes' *I, Too* and listened to musical selections such as Tupac's autobiographical song "Dear Mama." Additionally, Ms. G and I made sure that we included authors, poets, and musicians of color throughout the study. The literature of people like Langston Hughes was purposeful so the students could read and listen to content composed by Black and Brown figures. It was necessary we create an awareness for our students to know that ELA based instruction can encompass topics that address social and racial concerns and include authors who look like them. This awareness would be instrumental as we transitioned into Unit 2's objectives and plans.

Unit 2 Planning

After completing Unit 1 on Tuesday, October 12, 2021, Ms. G and I engaged in a second planning session on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, to prepare for Unit 2. During the planning session, we discussed the Unit's title and the overall purpose of the next four weeks. The following excerpts reflect that portion of our discussion.

Brooks: So with unit two, it's about moving on into students developing the wherewithal to address issues that they notice. So the title of Unit Two is Becoming Critical Change Agents. What do you think sounds better, Becoming Critical Change Agents or Becoming Critical Agents of Change?

Ms. G: Critical Change Agents.

Brooks: I know for some of the readings, I want to do readings that are basically almost like empirical studies where the authors are presenting the results of attempts to make

changes in society, where there's the government. So not only are the articles showing the actions and the steps towards change, but the potential change that actually occurred.

Does that make sense?

Ms. G: Yes.

One focus point of Unit 2 was to support the students as they took a critical look at the societal issues around them and to survey the work of critical change agents throughout the world. While planning, Ms. G and I discussed possible inquiry-driven tasks we wanted the students to complete. How could we tap into the issues in their environment so they would have a chance to examine problems they encounter daily? In the following excerpt, Ms. G and I discuss our ideas for instruction for Unit 2. The planning session for Unit 2 was not as lengthy as Unit 1. After this planning session, I came up with the rest of the activities and readings.

Brooks: I have a few articles that I've read - that I want to have students read. Can you think of anything, just any idea whether it be literature to include or an activity?

Ms. G: The girl Malala Yousafzai. She's the girl who got shot in the face by the Taliban. I think that will be beneficial to the kids to show how serious it is, even though Malala was faced with death, she still worked to create change in her country.

Brooks: One question I want to potentially pose is what must you be willing to lose to stand up for a cause or stand up for what you care about? Of course, I do want that culminating activity either on week three or week four to be something what they're writing or presenting something, or maybe creating something to address someone in power about an issue they notice.

Ms. G: So maybe they could think about what is it at a school?-- start local. What is it here that you want to address or change or fix? Write a letter to the principal. Start there, or maybe take it big and let them write a letter to the governor.

Ms. G's ideas throughout this conversation were helpful and instrumental as we planned Unit 2. To end Unit 2, I wanted to venture into more activities that touched on each area of the CCP framework. Ms. G's idea about the students writing a letter to a powerful figure, such as the principal or the governor, would allow the students to tap into each CCP tenet as we worked to provoke some sort of critical social change. Historicity would allow the students to consider their backgrounds and how their community has influenced what they care about. Dialogism would prompt them to have an outlet to communicate their concerns with each other, us as the teachers, and then transfer that communication in a crafted letter. Problem-posing is included because the students are encouraged to examine various issues they want to address. Emancipation can be found as students use this knowledge to craft intelligent and passionate arguments. Finally, the culminating activity is creating the letter and submitting it to the chosen party.

Unit 2 Implementation

Following this discussion, I constructed a table like Unit 1's instructional plan. I created the session objectives for each week. It was Ms. G's idea to include the work of Malala Yousafzai. She has taught about Malala's life and mission in previous classes. I had never heard of Malala before our conversation, but as I read on her life, I knew her story could potentially impact the focus of Unit 2 in a meaningful way. I found an interactive website dedicated to her life that I believed would be engaging for the students instead of reading an article. It was both Ms. G's and my idea to have the students compose a letter for the culminating activity. Table 8's instructional outline is below.

Table 8*Unit 2 Instructional Plan*

Session & Date	Session Objectives	In-Class Activities
Unit 2: Becoming Critical Change Agents		
Week 1: October 21, 2021	Students will explore national and international issues after reading about Iranian Revolution and viewing Black Lives Matter video clip. Students will examine how these topics impact them and society.	Read chapter 1 of <i>Persepolis</i> (2004) by Marjane Satrapi and view video (2020) of BLM activist Kimberly Jones. Students will then explore the emotional responses in the text and the video. Students will list issues and topics that they are interested in.
Week 2: October 28, 2021	Students will examine the concept of “change” by viewing the life story of Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and identifying how change is enacted in a society.	Brainstorm and share perspective on the word “change.” Students will view Malala Yousafzai video, review her website, and analyze how she affected change. Students will also research and identify the mayor and city council members in their city.
Week 3: November 9, 2021	Students will analyze the meaning and relevancy of critical literacy and elaborate on pivotal aspects of their community by examining Ernest Morrell quote and describing their community.	Read and explore meaning in Morrell (2003) quote. Students will pose questions and elaborate on the concerns they have for their community and changes they envision for their city.
Week 4: November 16, 2021	Students will engage in action-oriented agitation by creating, revising, and editing email that will be sent to their city’s mayor.	Students work alongside teachers to compose email that will be sent to their city mayor. Students also complete reflection exercise as a capstone activity for the study.

Throughout each week of Unit 2, students were encouraged to delve into the problem-posing, emancipatory, and praxis components of Morrell’s CCP framework. For the first week of the unit, students were able to juxtapose the depths of two important social movements- The Iranian Revolution of the late 1970s and early 1980s and today’s Black Lives Matter Movement.

To better understand each movement, students read a portion of the autobiographical graphic novel, *Persepolis* (2004). In the chapter entitled “The Veil,” we read about the author, Marjane’s, reaction to being forced to wear a veil and the imposition of the king who enforced rules that oppressed Iranian citizens. We also watched the 2020 YouTube video of activist Kimberly Jones responding to the riots that took place in American cities after the murder of George Floyd. As we read and viewed the video, we identified emotional responses and explored issues such as classism, sexism, racism, and discrimination in the text and video. Students were then positioned to engage in Morrell’s problem-posing strategy; they identified and listed problems they are concerned about both in their environment and globally. As Unit 2 continued, the student participants had additional opportunities to examine the purpose of critical literacy, synthesize the meaning of “change” and what change looks like to them, and they composed questions that directly addressed the issues and problems that matter to them. Within these activities, students were able to participate in inquiry-based emancipatory learning. They not only identified the problems they care about, but they also raised concerns about oppression, classism, racism, sexism, educational inequity, and gender inequality that figures in positions of power should work to mitigate to help make our world become a more equitable and united place. The culminating and final activity of the unit allowed the students, Ms. G, and me to work towards the attempted praxis of our critical literacy-based teaching and learning. Alongside the students, we constructed a letter to email to the mayor of the city. Before we constructed the letter to send to the mayor, students were instructed to research and write down the contact information for their city’s mayor and the city council members. This activity was rooted in both emancipation and praxis. This activity helped the students to realize that their voices and concerns have the potential to reach people in power who can affect real change. In the letter, we addressed the

students' concerns for their city and their desire to see positive change become a reality for their city and its inhabitants. The letter and its creation process is further described in the following section that documents the findings for the third research question. Next, I examine the student work artifacts through the Critical Discourse Analysis tool and CCP framework.

Instructional Reflection

The next table documents my discussion with Ms. G on Friday, November 19, 2021, after we completed the study. During this discussion, we reflected on our collaborative instruction, student engagement, and the concept of critical literacy. The purpose of this final meeting was to assess Ms. G's perspective on our instructional process as we worked together, the impact of the study and its effect on the student participants, and her perception of critical literacy following the study. For the interview's first question, I wanted to know Ms. G's feelings about our collaborative process. Working as a team was a prominent aspect of this study. We are required to work in collaborative teams in our professional roles. Gaining insight into Ms. G's thoughts about our efforts helped me to understand the development of her perspective on teacher collaboration after the study. I then asked Ms. G about her thoughts on the students' engagement and experience throughout the study. It was important for me to ask this question because Ms. G interacts with these students outside of this study. Her response to this question would offer more in-depth analysis because she observes them beyond the study's activities. I feel the study had a positive impact if she can attest to greater student engagement based on tasks rooted in critical literacy and social justice. Also, including diversified socio-cultural norms in classroom curricula is necessary because education should include the dynamics of Black students' cultural identity. My last question was about Ms. G's thoughts on critical literacy after the study's completion. I was interested to discover if her understanding of critical literacy had changed over the study. I

also wanted to know how she specifically theorized critical literacy after we engaged in critical literacy praxis throughout the study's tasks and activities. Ms. G's responses are below in table 9.

Again, I provide additional discussion for Ms. G's responses in chapter 5.

Table 9

Teacher Reflection Interview

Interview Topic	Transcription Question	Ms. G's Response
Instructional Process	- What are your thoughts on the teacher collaboration we engaged in during the study?	-I think it went very well. It was interesting to talk to someone else about a subject that I'm very interested in. Benefits is learning different things from you and seeing how you interact with the kids, and just implementing some of those strategies in my teaching, because you've been teaching for a certain amount of time, you get used to doing the same thing over and over again.
Student Engagement in ELA Coursework	- How would you describe the students' responses and the results of their work in the study?	- I think they did very well. I was pleased with their participation. And some of the work that they submitted, it seems like they were very, very thoughtful.
Critical Literacy	- How would you describe your perception, your understanding of critical literacy now that the study has ended?	- Diverse literature that touches on all different ethnic backgrounds. Literature that deals with tough topics, literature that analyzes the state of the world from different people's perspectives, literature that the students are able to relate to and see themselves in.

Coding and Thematic Analysis

Before reviewing my examination of the students' writing, I present the codes and themes I identified based on their writing. After analyzing the students' writing, the following codes and themes highlight some of the major concepts and ideas that emerged from the analysis. These codes and themes are not specifically found in the writing artifacts, but I identified them to provide additional insight into the scope of the students' responses. They also emphasize the concepts and ideas that are most salient in the students' writing. Unit 1's codes are **Identity**, **Individuality**, and **School Experiences**. Unit 2's codes are **Change**, **Action**, and **Progress**. Tables 10 and 11 below provide a visual reference for the codes and corresponding themes for each unit.

Table 10

Unit 1 Codes

Codes	Themes
Identity	-Critical Identity Development
Individuality	-Self-Expression and Reflection
School Experiences	-Increased Student Engagement

Identity is the first code that I created. Throughout Unit 1, students surveyed and explored intricate moments that have been instrumental in their development and growth. Ms. G and I were interested in the students' cultural norms which lead to students addressing and describing events and lived experiences that contributed to the cultural norms that they participate in. Consequently, the themes I created derived from the exploration of identity. "Critical Identity Development," is the first theme I created within the Identity code. This theme is reflective of the work the students engaged in as they responded to issues like stereotypes, labels placed on teenagers, misconceptions about Black people, and false assumptions about

gender representation. I used the term “critical” to qualify this theme because the students used these activities to problematize and speak against the mistreatment they have received because of the way they look or their age group.

I created the code Individuality because it is an extension of the Identity code. The code of Individuality created additional space for students to be more personalized and individualized with their writing. The theme for this code is “Self-Expression and Reflection.” I created this theme because students began describing how they have been affected by many of the lived experiences they have endured. They discussed the influence of various family members, the impact of loss and death, and the sociocultural elements in their lives that have played a role in their personal individuality. One goal of Unit 1 was to create opportunities for the students to be introspective and include autobiographical elements into their writing. With this thought in mind, I created a choice-based task for the students to complete their autobiographical assignment. I did not want the students to be confined to only writing an essay or a book report. They were able to employ various modalities to complete this task, and they were given the freedom to express themselves without restraint. The students provided insight into their critical life moments through illustrations, poems, and short stories. Each submission was different, but each submission was poignant because the students were able to respond to the task how they wanted to instead of being forced to respond one way.

School Experiences is the last code for Unit 1. In conjunction with students writing about their home life, they were encouraged to examine their relationships with school. Most of the writing on this topic took a political stance as students addressed the power dynamics of being forced to attend school and the mundane curriculum they are required to learn. To best represent these sentiments, I titled the theme for this code as “Increased Student Engagement.” Most of the

students described school as a place they dislike because they are forced to follow a prescribed schedule, they are controlled by administrators who do not understand them, and they are instructed by teachers who do not infuse any relevant or relatable content into the lessons. As the students described how school is boring and monotonous, they also began to make connections to the hegemonic systems that have played a part in their school experiences and why they feel school is not felt complementary or connected to their lives. They became more engaged and wrote in greater detail as they worked on activities that allowed them to actively describe how they felt about school.

The activities above focused on the students exploring the sociocultural norms and lived experiences that shape their lives. As we transitioned into Unit 2, students were poised to examine and address the issues they have observed within and throughout their lived experiences. The codes and themes that emerged from student work in Unit 2 are listed in the table below.

Table 11

Unit 2 Codes

Codes	Themes
Change	-Challenging the Norm
Action	-Speaking Against Oppressive Cycles
Progress	- The Agentive Power of Our Voice

The first code Change represents a major concept for Unit 2. One focus of Unit 2 encouraged students to define change and to identify areas in their community and society they wanted to see improved. I identified the theme “Challenging the Norm.” As students described their ideas for change, they considered issues that have pervaded their community and society. They spoke about change that is intentional to improve systems and make life better for

everyone. The second code is Action. Action is an integral part of becoming a change agent. I believe this code is a necessary component of the work the students completed for Unit 2. Also, action is synonymous to the emancipatory and praxis elements in Morrell's CCP. The first theme found in this area is "Speaking Against Oppressive Cycles." Students first began to question the community and societal issues they did not agree with. This action then led to them speaking out against oppressive cycles in their neighborhood such as litter, damaged roads, and food scarcity that have gone unaddressed and avoided for many years. Throughout Unit 2's activities, they began to confront these issues, and they realized the inequities that exist as nearby affluent communities do not contend with many of the problems they endure in their communities. The last code is Progress. Activities throughout this study were structured to support students as they developed as writers who advocate for critical social change. They made progress towards this objective in two areas that I have outlined in the following theme- "The Agentive Power of Our Voice." Many of the students in the study became critical thinkers who began to understand the power they held by using their voices. By participating in this study, the students did not find their voices or find agency. They already had a sense of independence, identity, individuality, and agency. However, through this study, they were able to explore these constructs, examine their lives, and they were equipped to harness their agency and use their power to provoke possible change.

Student Work Artifacts: Critical Discourse Analysis

I now present the analysis of the student work artifacts through the CDA tool. As previously stated, Ms. G's 9th grade Literature/Composition class consisted of 13 students. Four of the students identify as males and the other nine students identify as females. Every student identified as African American. My third research question, "How are students impacted by

engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?” guides the following data analysis. Again, I employed Fairclough’s (1995) specific CDA tool to analyze the student work, create themes, and extract codes from this analysis. I also explored student impact through cyclical analysis of the students’ writing in conjunction with their use of CCP elements and my use of CDA to further examine their artifacts. Rymes (2009) highlights the work teachers can do to positively analyze student discourse, stating, “research into cross-cultural communication in classroom contexts has been able to enhance teachers and students’ mutual understanding—reconceptualizing deficits as differences, and differences as resources for learning,” (pg. 7). Critical Discourse Analysis as a tool for research analysis is useful for my specific scholarship because CDA’s intention is to understand language that connects the social and cultural contexts of the speaker/writer to the social and cultural constructs that exist in the world. As I analyzed the students’ writing, I was constantly reminded of the question, how are speakers/writers using language to tell their stories and respond to issues such as racism, oppression, and inequality?

The next section documents analysis of the students’ writing artifacts. I have created Critical Discourse Analysis tables that highlight the students’ writing, their processing, and social analysis. The actual artifacts can be found starting with **Appendix H**. I reiterate each week’s instructional focus before I begin this section of analysis. Unit 1’s focus included stereotypes, student perceptions of school, items of sentimental value, and critical lived experiences. Select weeks also included a reflection activity that allowed students to describe their thoughts and feelings about that week’s lesson. I have also created a CCP matrix to coincide with the analysis. This matrix tracks the students’ assignments throughout the study and categorizes responses based on their inclusion of dialogism, historicity, problem-posing,

emancipatory, and praxis. Throughout my analysis, I examine both students' writing that successfully emphasizes CCP elements, and I analyze students' writing that does not always emphasize CCP elements as consistently. The CCP matrixes for each unit are found in **Appendix F** and **Appendix G**. I have placed a sample view of the matrix in table 12 below.

Table 12

CCP Sample Matrix

Unit 1	Dialogism	Historicity	Problem-Posing	Emancipatory	Praxis
Week 1-Stereotypes		Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah	
		Djeene	Djeene	Djeene	
		John	John		
		Stamos	Stamos		
		Mathias	Mathias		

Unit 1: Week 1 CDA Analysis

Week one's writing activity allowed students to explore the concept of stereotypes and their experiences contending with stereotypes and labels being placed on them. Four students emphasized historicity, problem-posing, and emancipatory criteria in their writing. I have chosen to analyze Djeene's, Mathias', and John Stamos' writing for the stereotype activity (see Table 13). Again, the following tables showcase CDA analysis of students and their various uses of CCP elements in their writing based on that week's writing activity.

Table 13*Unit 1: Week 1 Activity- Personal Stereotypes Activity*

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Djeene	A stereotype that is often placed on me is that I'm "white-washed."	These stereotypes are usually placed on me by Black people that barely know me.	I don't like the term "white-washed" because it creates the stereotype that you can act a certain race. This single story don't make me feel good about myself it's not true.
Mathias	A stereotype placed on some of us is that we think we're better because we're in gifted and advanced classes.	You might start to believe the stereotypes placed on you.	Stereotypes are bound to effect you negatively because you might feel forced to either disprove or make it true.
John Stamos	A stereotype put on me is that I play basketball. I play basketball but what if I'm trash. I'm not trash.	All people feel this way- even other black people.	I don't think it's a power thing. People just feel this way.

Reading through Djeene's responses on stereotypes provided immense insight into her personal experiences and how stereotyping has impacted her. This statement provides clear historicity exploration. Djeene stated she often deals with the label "white-washed." This term is rooted in the idea that Black people engage in performative behaviors that are typical of white people. As Djeene processed these experiences she identifies that people who *barely* know her assign this label to her. This is intriguing; Djeene is aware that people who call her "white-washed" have no real clue about her true personality and interests. I placed the following statement, "I don't like the term "white-washed" because it creates the stereotype that you can act a certain race. This single story don't make me feel good about myself it's not true," in the

social analysis section because Djeene realized that it is a social construct that assigns racial identification to behaviors and interests. One common bias and misconception in this stereotype asserts that Black people who speak using standards of English grammar must be “white-washed.” Djeene’s ability to identify that this single story does not make her “feel good” demonstrates the oppressive and restrictive power of stereotypes that go unchecked and unassessed. Also, Djeene is problem-posing throughout these responses. She is examining how she has been treated in society and how this treatment affects her. Djeene is impacted by this week’s activity because through this problem-posing, Djeene positions herself to begin the challenging work to dismantle these stereotypes as she stands in her authentic identity and gains her own power. Through this identity and power development, she is equipped to harness her identity and speak against forces that mis-label her.

In Mathias’ writing, he describes the stereotype he feels is often placed on him and his peers for being in gifted and advanced classes. Mathias’ writing aligns with historicity because he writes about his specific experiences, along with his classmates, as students in gifted and advanced classes. Mathias problem-poses in his responses when he says, “You might start to believe the stereotypes placed on you,” and “You might feel forced to either disprove or make it true.” These statements align with problem-posing because Mathias realizes stereotypes often impact you by stifling the diversity you represent. No one should be placed in a box, and often, stereotypes stifle fluidity and expression which can cause us to adapt to what society has imposed on us or as Mathias stated, “force us to disprove” society’s labels. Mathias is impacted here by his assessment of the labels he contends with. He realizes that stereotypes often alter your ability to just be yourself. The impact here shows that Mathias feels that stereotypes limit power, autonomy, and self-expression.

John Stamos describes the stereotype often placed on him and other Black people. He states it is often assumed that Black people play basketball and football. John confirms he does play basketball which is anchored in his historicity. I placed John's statement, "All people feel this way- even other black people," in the processing analysis because John believes this stereotype is corroborated and perpetuated by fellow Black people. In the social analysis, I placed John's statement that he "does not think it's a power thing. People just feel this way." I categorized this statement in the social analysis because for John this is not a social issue that hinders or limits power.

John's writing is not as in-depth as the other two students' responses for this week. He understands what a stereotype is, but he identifies with the stereotype he describes. He also mentions that he is "not trash" to explain that he is good at playing basketball. Because of this fact, I believe he is not impacted by the potential harmful effects of this stereotype. To further substantiate his feelings, John does not think this stereotype is a "power thing." John does make a strong point when he mentions that this stereotype is espoused by fellow Black people. The underlying meaning here could be that certain stereotypes are increasingly difficult to contend with when they not only come from other racial groups, but when they also come from people who look like you. John is not negatively impacted by this stereotype based on his response, but what about John's Black peers who are not good at basketball? They may feel inferior or powerless because of this stereotype and how it impacts them.

The analysis of Djeene's, Mathias', and John's writing demonstrates how students were at different levels of criticality at this point in the study. Their exploration and investment in the activity highlights their positions and introductory thoughts on stereotypes. Djeene and Mathias provided a deeper analysis of how they identify and synthesize stereotypes. John's analysis is not

as detailed or personalized, but each student's response reflects how they are impacted by stereotypes based on their experiences.

Week 1 Reflection CDA Analysis

After completing the week one writing activity, students completed a reflection activity. The prompt asked them to explain their thoughts on the week's activity and to explain if they believe other high school students would benefit from the activity. Three of the 13 students included dialogism, historicity, problem-posing, and emancipatory in the week one reflection activity. I have chosen to analyze Aaliyah's writing and John Stamos' writing for the stereotype reflection activity. Aaliyah's reflection showed rich impact and exploration of the stereotype lesson. John Stamos' reflection was not as robust, but these two artifacts present varied responses to the week's lesson. Table 14 below represents their responses.

Table 14

Unit 1: Week 1 Stereotype Reflection Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Aaliyah	This week's activity gave me a better understanding on how stereotypes impact someone's mindset and feelings towards something.	What stood out was hearing the different stereotypes from my classmates.	A lot of high school students would benefit from these activities because its giving them a chance to express their feelings about the topics we talk about.
John Stamos	I feel nothing about this week's activities so this isn't a good question to ask.	I feel like some will benefit in these activities. Even I might.	The African lady lived a decent life in Africa.

For this week's reflection activity, Aaliyah stated that hearing about her classmates' different stereotypes stood out to her. I placed this statement in the processing analysis because

processing analysis is concerned with the exploration of language situated in a specific context of time and location. The students were able to learn about each other's different experiences around the same concept, but in a structured learning environment where they can deepen their knowledge and better understand each other as peers and individuals. In the social analysis, Aaliyah noted that students would "benefit from these activities because its giving them a chance to express their feelings." She understands the power of discourse and open dialogue to better understand her classmates' historicity. This also establishes an introduction for problem-posing and emancipation. As students engage in these transparent conversations with their peers and teachers, they can be equipped with more agency and insight to provoke change and promote equality.

John Stamos first stated he "feels nothing about this week's activities so this isn't a good question to ask." I would have liked if each student had strong feelings about the stereotype activity, but I appreciate his honest response. I also understand this was the first week so John may not have been initially invested or concerned about the activities. In the processing analysis, John mentions that "even I might" benefit from the stereotype lesson which offers possible impact for the future; John did not immediately gravitate to the lesson, but he may find relevance later. For the social analysis, John noted that Chimamanda "lived a decent life in Africa." I placed this in the social analysis because although this is a surface level response, John recognizes and recalls that Chimamanda's life dismisses the common impoverished stereotype placed on Africans.

Unit 1: Week 2 CDA Analysis

Week two's activity required students to read an excerpt from the case study *Bad Boys* (2001) about students' school experiences and perceptions. They then described their own school

experiences and perceptions. Students incorporated CCP elements of historicity and problem-posing in their writing. I have coded Tyler and Elisa's writing for this week. Table 15 is below:

Table 15

Unit 1: Week 2 Reading Activity- Bad Boys by Ann Ferguson

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Tyler	The teacher is supposed to be the most excited person in the classroom. Even the teachers are tired and bored.	I feel like every day is the same. Do a ton of boring busy work. Have fun with my friends in gym.	Virtual learning was not really a problem for me. My peers on the other hand seem to hate it. They say things like "I feel like I wasn't learning."
Elisa	Even for the best students, school can be boring. School to me is a headache.	For most of my periods, I'm very quiet.	Virtual learning made me realize that school is really watered down. Especially when teachers really want to teach something else but can't because it doesn't go with the lesson plan.

Tyler stated the teacher is supposed to be the most excited person in the classroom. This assertion leads me to think that Tyler believes engagement and instructional impact begins with the teacher. A teacher's exuberance should fill the classroom and incite students to also be excited about learning. Tyler then began to explore historicity alignment and said, "I feel like every day is the same. Do a ton of boring busy work." This aligns with historicity because Tyler is now describing his school perception based on his own past and present experiences. He provided a stark contrast in his next statement when he said, "Have fun with my friends in gym." For Tyler, school is a place that is filled with the same dull routines and schedule. Tyler is only fulfilled when he is with his friends at gym. I placed these comments in the processing analysis

section because these comments reveal Tyler's thoughts about his daily experiences throughout the school day. In the social analysis section, Tyler states he did not have a problem with virtual learning, however his friends had issues with it because they felt like they "were not learning." Regarding the social analysis, I conclude that Tyler does not feel empowered by his school experiences. It appears that school for him is only enjoyable when he has the freedom to socialize with friends. There is problem-posing in these statements. Tyler's school experiences have not equipped him to take ownership of his learning, nor does he feel engaged throughout the school day. School is a societal requirement that is mundane and repetitive.

Elisa is the second student's work I analyzed from this task because of her CCP alignment for this week. I placed "school to me is a headache" under the textual analysis section because for Elisa to compare school to a headache reveals that school for her can be likened to a painful and/or annoying experience. I placed, "For most of my periods, I'm very quiet," in the processing analysis section because Elisa does not communicate regularly throughout the school day. In an environment full of her peers, Elisa remains "quiet." I wonder if she feels as if her voice is unimportant or her expressed thoughts do not matter. I placed the following quote in the social analysis section, "School is really watered down. Especially when teachers really want to teach something else but can't because it doesn't go with the lesson plan." This quote belongs in the social analysis section because Elisa not only feels like school is a place that eliminates autonomy and voice for her as a student, but also for the teachers. In essence, teachers cannot be creative or exploratory because they are required to follow a prescribed lesson plan. Each of Elisa's comments signify historicity and problem-posing. Elisa is reflecting on and revealing her school perception and experiences. However, she is also identifying problems that exist in her educational experiences. Elisa's problem-posing here is not only indicative of the issues as a

student, but also indicates that teachers should also have a problem with the monotony and rigidity of school.

Week 2 Reflection CDA Analysis

Week two's reflection required students to describe their immediate thoughts about school and for the students to explain what they think could happen if they had opportunities to discuss their feelings about school with teachers and administrators. Students included CCP elements of historicity, and problem-posing in the connected week 2 reflection activity. Table 16 below includes Ayanna's writing and Riyah's writing. I reviewed Ayanna's reflection activity for week two because she explores historicity through her past school experiences, and she embodies problem-posing alignment as she contends with the requirements placed on her throughout the school day. Riyah's writing includes elements of historicity and problem-posing.

Table 16

Unit 1: Week 2 Reflection Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Ayanna	I feel pretty bummed out whenever I think about school. I'd like if we had more chances to share our ideas for new programs, clubs, etc.	I don't particularly enjoy waking up early everyday to learn about things that I'm not interested in.	School, in my opinion, is more like a chore than anything else. Our relationships with our teachers would grow if we had something to discuss outside of the curriculum.
Riyah	When I think of school I think about being rushed around into different rooms, to write and write.	Boring cold classrooms mostly filled with people I don't know.	Maybe they would realize how things can be changed to a good liking for everyone.

I placed “I feel pretty bummed out whenever I think about school,” in the textual analysis section because to feel “bummed out” conveys a feeling of disappointment and/or annoyance. The very thought of school does not incite joy or fulfillment for Ayanna. This feeling and statement precedes Ayanna’s other feelings relative to her school experiences. In the processing analysis, Ayanna does not “enjoy waking up early everyday” to learn about things she’s not interested in. This sentiment adds context to Ayanna’s thoughts about school. The time is inconvenient, and she is uninterested in the content she learns. As I review the social analysis section for Ayanna, I refer to the concept of power and the lack thereof mentioned in the previous analyses. Ayanna stated that school feels like a “chore,” and the teacher/student relationship would be deepened if there were more opportunities for discussions outside of curriculum. I interpret all of this to mean that Ayanna feels like school is a mandatory chore or undesirable task that stifles both teachers and students to carry out rigid orders throughout the day. These orders do not accommodate or support a sense of power or authority for the people who inhabit the school setting.

I placed “When I think of school I think about being rushed around into different rooms, to write and write,” in the textual analysis because this statement signifies that school is a place where she feels controlled and forced. In process analysis, Riyah describes school as a place with “boring cold classrooms mostly filled with people I don’t know.” This is in the processing analysis because for Riyah school is not only a place where she feels controlled, but she also finds it mundane and there is no social development for her because she makes it a point to mention that she does not know her classmates. So there is a lack of freedom and interaction in her school experience. It appears that Riyah feels isolated at school. Finally, Riyah’s last comments are placed in the social analysis section because she makes strong points about how

everyone can be impacted by changes made in the school. She stated, “Maybe they would realize how things can be changed to a good liking for everyone.” I interpret this to mean that if administrators and teachers really valued and considered the concerns of the students then the learning environment could be enjoyable and enriched for both teachers and students. This dynamic could allow students to gain some autonomy and power in their school experiences and possibly reduce the negative impact of isolation and control that Riyah describes in her writing.

Unit 1: Week 3 CDA Analysis

Students were tasked to describe and share anecdotal information about a personal item of sentimental value for week three. Students exhibited elements of historicity, emancipatory, and praxis in their writing. Table 17 below depicts Nyla’s and Riyah’s writing which present two different anecdotes.

Table 17

Unit 1: Week 3 Sentimental Value Item Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Nyla	An item I cherish is my first pair of dance shoes my grandad bought me before he passed.	This item means a lot. Me and my grandad were very close we did everything together. I wish we had more time together.	He would even help me learn things I didn’t know. When holding my shoes it just helps me keep going.
Riyah	This item is a ring, it’s my grandmother’s ring that was given to my mom after she passed. The ring was her wedding ring.	It makes me feel closer to that grandmother I didn’t know. The ring was beautiful really you could see how it looked from my grandma’s wedding photo.	Now it’s like a dingy gold. It’s now a family heirloom, that I hope will be passed down through generations.

For week three, students were tasked to describe and share anecdotal information about a personal item of sentimental value. The selected students in the chart above included the historicity, emancipatory, and praxis domains in CCP in their writing. Historicity is evident in the students' description of the items they received from their treasured family members who have impacted their lives. Emancipatory criteria is found in their writing because although the people who they received these items from have passed on, they still highly value these items. Other people may see these items as old or insignificant, but Nyla and Riyah use these items as a source of power and strength that can only come from the connection of people who have immensely impacted their life. Student Nyla cherishes the first pair of dance shoes her granddad purchased for her before he passed. As Nyla proceeds into processing analysis, she states that she and her grandfather were very close, and their relationship is further defined by the fact that they "did everything together." One of the components of processing analysis is the consideration of time and place. Nyla states that she wishes she had more time with her grandfather. This fact highlights how pivotal their relationship is to her life. It also speaks to the impact he left on her. Dynamics of power in CDA analysis and emancipatory elements in CCP work in tandem. I placed the following comment in the social analysis, "He would even help me learn things I didn't know. When holding my shoes it just helps me keep going," for several reasons. Nyla received dance shoes from her grandfather, but they hold deeper symbolic meaning; they empower her because she received them from a person who was instrumental in her development. Also, she asserts that he helped her learn things she did not know. This guidance serves as a sense of cultural capital rooted in the familial bond she shared with her grandfather.

Riyah chose to describe her deceased grandmother's wedding ring that was passed down to her. It is evident that Riyah honors her grandmother's memory through this item. She says it

makes her feel closer to her grandmother, and she does not wear it, but admires its beauty that “you could see how it looked from my grandma’s wedding photo.” Moving to the social analysis, Riyah’s family treats this ring as an heirloom that will hopefully be passed down through the family’s lineage. Riyah calls the ring “dingy.” However, the ring’s condition does not tarnish its significance as an item that holds symbolic memories of love and familial ties that are priceless. In this instance, the CCP element of praxis is found in what Nyla and Riyah do with the items they have received. Riyah wants to hold on to the ring and continually pass the heirloom down to the next generation after her. Nyla said she finds comfort and strength in the memory of what her dear grandfather gave her. These two students use praxis identification as a source of power and capital. It is important to recognize the power these items possess. They are not expensive items, and Riyah even acknowledges the ring is “dingy.” However, they explore the capital wealth and power of these items through their analysis and writing.

Week 3 Reflection CDA Analysis

Week three’s reflection asked students to describe how they think a consistent “show and tell” activity could impact teacher/student relationships. Students aligned with elements of CCP including dialogism, problem-posing, and emancipatory criteria in week three’s reflection activity. Table 18 below represents Elisa’s and Ayanna’s responses to the reflection activity for week three. Both students provided differing insight into how teacher and student relationships could be impacted by continuing the week three’s activity.

Table 18

Unit 1: Week 3 Reflection Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
Elisa	Having a show and tell activity could show how teenagers feel and show	Most students did show and tell as kids in K-5 th grade when emotions	Now that we’re all older I think doing a show and tell would have a

	appreciation to little things in life.	were just on the surface.	good impact on teacher student relationships.
Ayanna	Show and tell would grow student/teacher relationships.	Sharing items we cherish or find interesting.	Help us get to know more about each other.

Elisa first stated that the “show and tell” based activity we engaged in could help teenagers with appreciating things in their life. I think Elisa made a valid and poignant point in this statement that reflects the power of dialogism in instruction. It is important for teenagers to have an outlet where they can discuss impactful aspects of their lives. For the processing analysis, I placed Elisa’s statement about show and tell being a common occurrence in K-5th grade classrooms. She further mentions that “emotions are on the surface” for k-5 students. I interpret this to mean that Elisa believes that our life experiences have more profound meaning as we age. I placed, “Now that we’re all older I think doing a show and tell would have a good impact on teacher student relationships,” in the social analysis section. This is also a source of problem-posing and emancipation because students and teachers can forge a deeper bond if students are allowed to share meaningful parts of their lives in class with their teachers and fellow peers. In turn, teachers can also bridge a divide with their students by sharing personal items from their lives with students.

Ayanna’s writing includes elements of historicity and dialogism. I placed, “Regular show and tell would help grow student/teacher relationships,” in the textual analysis because Ayanna believes this type of activity could improve the dynamics amongst teachers and students. I placed, “Sharing items we cherish or find interesting,” in the processing analysis because Ayanna understands the depth of this type of activity. The goal is to share personal items that hold significant value. Through this exchange, teachers and students can appreciate the valuable memories and artifacts that are presented in class. “Help us get to know more about each other”

is in the social analysis section because, in this statement, Ayanna synthesizes how show and tell activities can strengthen the bond and relationship teachers and students share. As we learn more about each other, we can support each other's authenticity and appreciate each other's differences. These types of instructional moments reinforce the need for a sociocultural learning environment that focuses on empowering the whole class through an emphasis on cultural relevancy for every student's lived experiences.

Unit 1: Week 4 CDA Analysis

Week four allowed students to describe a critical life moment that has shaped them in any way. Students were given the option to create an illustration, write a poem, compose a song, or write a short story to depict their critical life moment. Some students described pleasant memories while others described painful memories. The assignment ultimately provided greater insight into the students' lived experiences. Five of the students included elements of historicity and problem-posing criteria in their assignment. I have chosen to analyze Aaliyah and Saniya's writing for this week because they represent varied examples of the CCP elements in their work as noted in table 19 below.

Table 19

Unit 1: Week 4 Critical Lived Experiences Choice Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Aaliyah Choice Activity- Short Story	The house we stayed in was a beautiful brick house with a full front yard, and back with a large back porch. We stayed in that house for six years, until the big fire started in my room from my old box fan.	As a young child, I never really thought about how your life could easily be taken from you until 2014 and at the age of 9 was when I finally got that wake up call.	I felt like it was my fault one for the fire, and the house getting robbed. The life lesson I learned was don't get to comfortable because things can change drastically.

Saniya Choice Activity- Poem	You may be wondering what is this mystery word- the word is cancer But I call it a killing bird	The C word A word to remember The C word A known life ender	It swoops in to take the people you love and forces family to grieve in silence
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Aaliyah's initial points in her short story highlight the beauty of the home she grew up in. She states the house was "beautiful with a full front yard, and back with a large wooden back porch." The beautiful house, however, is destroyed because of a fire that started in Aaliyah's bedroom. Aaliyah's narrative account is based in historicity. She states that she did not realize how life could be so adversely impacted by a single action until that devastating event. I believe this assertion belongs in the processing analysis section because Aaliyah is able to conceptualize how we as human beings come to grips with life-altering events at key stages in our development and maturation. In the social analysis, Aaliyah begins to problem-pose. Aaliyah mentions how she felt like she was at fault for the fire and subsequent robbery of her family's home. This moment also triggered her to believe that she cannot "get too comfortable because things can change drastically." I believe the points within this social analysis section speak to how Aaliyah adopted a new outlook on the world after this event. Reading through her story, I wonder why her childhood home was burglarized after the fire. Did this moment cause her to feel additional guilt and shame because the fire started because of the portable heater in her room? I view these considerations as Aaliyah engaging in additional problem-posing. I believe this event left an indelible mark on Aaliyah that possibly affects her relationships with loss, socialization, privilege, and access especially if she subscribes to the notion that "you can't get too comfortable" as she maneuvers through life

The second student, Saniya, describes her experience with a family death due to cancer. In the textual analysis, she calls cancer a “killing bird.” The words “killing bird” are figurative and literal in Saniya’s poem. The loss of a loved one to cancer is likened to a bird that swoops in and takes people away. Saniya’s writing emphasizes both historicity and problem-posing. The use of these words highlights Saniya’s relationship with cancer and loss. Saniya states that cancer is a word to remember, and it is a known life ender. I placed these lines in the processing analysis section because Saniya supports her initial point about cancer with more context of how she relates to cancer. In her lived experiences, she has come to terms with the fact that her loved one did not survive cancer- “it is a known life ender.” As I examine the comment “forces family to grieve in silence,” I wonder how this impacts Saniya on a social level. It is also through this processing and analysis that Saniya clearly begins to problem-pose. Why does Saniya state that cancer “forces family to grieve in silence?” Did her family not engage in healthy discourse about cancer and the subsequent death? Were Saniya and her family unable to receive grief counseling after this event? What cultural norms and traditions exist in her family that “forces family to grieve in silence?” These questions and considerations are necessary to ponder as teachers seek to build culturally competent relationships with their students that extend beyond standard curriculum objectives.

Unit 2: Week 1 CDA Analysis

I now transition into analyzing Unit 2’s student writing. Again, the focus of Unit 2 included students responding to global societal issues they notice, examining Black figures who have made impactful change within their community, analyzing and synthesizing Morrell’s definition of critical literacy, identifying issues they notice in their own community and neighborhood, and addressing people in power to confront these issues for potential change. For week 1, students

analyzed societal issues that concern them. I have chosen to analyze Riyah and Mathias' writing because of the information they include in their work that highlights historicity, problem-posing, and the societal issues that concern them. Table 20 is below.

Table 20

Unit 2: Week 1 Community/Societal Issues Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
Riyah	-Opportunities for Black people -Black health care rights -Jobs accepting Black and Brown people	There's many times when I walk into a store it's like I'm being stalked and hawked like I'm a criminal.	There was a time in life where things like this didn't bother because that's just how it is when you're Black, but when it happens now it definitely bothers me.
Mathias	An issue that frustrates me is that Black men have a forced mindset that they have to either be aggressive, manly, or look intimidating to be respected.	This wall is the reason most Black men have a hard time expressing their emotions.	It goes along with the idea that just because you show emotion or are apart of the LGBTQ+ community that you are less of a man or you aren't as strong.

Riyah's issues of concern center around increased opportunities for Black and Brown people in both healthcare and the workforce. As Riyah further explores these concerns, she steps into processing analysis by describing her own personal experiences with discrimination; she recalls how she feels like she is being stalked and viewed as a criminal when she goes into stores. I placed this statement in the processing analysis because this point demonstrates Riyah's real-world experiences with discrimination as a Black person. She specifically recounts how she is mistreated and viewed in places and spaces where she should not feel this way. In the social analysis, Riyah begins to problematize this treatment. She states how there was once a time when

this form of racism did not bother her because she just accepted it as “the way it is.” However, as a teenager in her present state, she identifies that this does “bother” her. Understanding the emotional and psychological effects of this treatment has caused Riyah to realize racial inequality is not ok and should not be accepted as the norm. As we problematize and deconstruct social conditions in this country, we are then positioned to take emancipatory and praxis-oriented steps to dismantle societal inequities.

Mathias, who identifies as a Black male, describes his issues with the norms of masculinity that exist for Black men. In the textual analysis, I have placed the terms “frustrates” and “forced mindset” because Mathias’ use of these words helps to illustrate how this rigid construct makes him feel. For processing, I placed “have a hard time expressing their emotions,” because Mathias may feel this way because of the interactions and experiences he has had with the Black men in his life whether that is within his family or at school. Mathias further explores this concept of rigidity in gender representation as he delves into the social realm of critical discourse analysis. Mathias explains that Black men who are members of the LGBTQ+ community are labeled as weak, and any sign of emotion makes you “less of a man.” From Mathias’ vantage point, Black men are often controlled by very structured rules that dictate their behaviors and socialization. I view Mathias’ writing as a form of speaking out against the cultural and social limitations that impact his life and the lives of many Black men. Being able to comprehend this reality has the power to equip Mathias to liberate himself and others from this form of oppression.

Unit 2: Week 2 CDA Analysis

For week two, students were required to define the word “change” and explore the term’s meaning to them. Several students’ perspective on “change” mirrored the tasks we completed

throughout the unit which focused on examining societal issues and addressing them. Seven of the students included problem-posing, emancipatory, and praxis criteria in their statements. I have applied Mathias, John Stamos, Kiara, and Aaliyah's perspectives to table 19 below.

Table 19

Unit 2: Week 2 Activity- Perspectives on "Change"

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
Aaliyah John Stamos Kiara Mathias	(Change) Doing something for the greater good. -Mathias	(Change) Making a difference. -John Stamos	Change means trying to make something right for not just yourself but for everyone. -Kiara (Change) Becoming something new and better for yourself not for others. -Aaliyah

Mathias stated that change is "doing something for the greater good." I placed this in the textual analysis because I believe Mathias views change as action that seeks to improve. Mathias is problem-posing and exploring emancipation-based ideologies here. For Mathias, change must be positive and for the "good." I placed John Stamos' comment in the processing analysis section. "Making a difference" could mean changing or repairing a broken system. Making a difference could also mean helping someone in need. It is not clear what that difference could be based on his statement, but change is action-oriented according to John Stamos. The comments I placed in the social analysis section show deeper context. These social analysis comments incorporate problem-posing, emancipatory concepts, and praxis. Kiara and Aaliyah speak to the idea of change that promotes agency for self and advocates for agency for others. Kiara stated, "Change means trying to make something right for not just yourself but for everyone," and

Aaliyah stated change is “becoming something new and better for yourself not for others.” Kiara describes the concept of change that impacts and serves communities and groups of people. In her statement, she considers how life can be improved for people around you. I think of words like altruism and philanthropy when I read Kiara’s response. This response shows that Kiara believes in dismantling inequities in the world around her. Aaliyah’s response reminds me of emancipatory based action. She is thoughtful about “becoming something new and better for yourself.” I think of concepts like self-reflection and evolution when I read Aaliyah’s statement on change. I also believe Aaliyah’s statement is important to consider as we think about speaking truth to power and provoking societal change; that type of work begins within yourself. As a change agent, you must be honest about what you commit to, and the reason why you do it.

Unit 2: Week 3 CDA Analysis

Week 3 required students to respond to the following Morrell quote:

When writing is not about preparation for some future outcome, such as a "good" grade, admission to an elite graduate program, or a well-paying job; rather writing is itself an action of import to the moment; when literacy is life generative and regenerative, sustaining revolutionary discourse through composers with the courage and confidence to contribute commentary and contestation in chaotic times.

Students addressed historicity, problem-posing, and emancipatory criteria in their writing for week three. Elisa included each element in her response to the Morrell quote. Saniya included historicity and problem-posing in her writing. I analyze their responses in table 20 below.

Table 20

Unit 2: Week 3 Reading Activity- Morrell Quote: “A Goal of Critical Literacy”

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
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Elisa	I think teaching can and should be adjusted to the meaning of the quote.	Writing shouldn't just be about what happened in the past but also things going on in the present.	Literacy should be a continuously growing thing as more people discover new changes and things about themselves and the things around them.
Saniya	I think teaching and learning should be adjusted.	Students can become more obsessed with their academic grade and forget about mental health.	I feel like students should have more opportunities to write about what's important to them.

I posed the question, “Do you think teaching and learning can be adjusted to resemble the meaning of the quote?” Elisa’s response, that is found in the textual analysis, is “I think teaching can and should be adjusted to the meaning of the quote.” Elisa’s use of “can and should” alerts me to believe she thinks it is both possible and necessary for education to reflect much of Morrell’s quote. In the processing analysis, she mentions that writing should encompass what is going on in the present. Elisa is a teenager who has been exposed to and has gained knowledge about various societal issues such as COVID-19 and police brutality. She makes a strong statement here. She understands that many of the issues we endure today deserve to be discussed and elaborated on in educational spaces. It is vital that high school students engage in active discourse about relevant and current day issues because they are affected by these issues too. I placed Elisa’s last comment in the social analysis section because it speaks to the evolutionary nature of socialization. Elisa’s assertion leads me to believe that she understands the liberative power of literacy development. She stated that literacy should “continuously grow as we make new discoveries.” Agency and literacy are tied together because as we evolve our relationship with literacy should also adapt and change.

After reviewing Saniya's writing, I placed "I think teaching and learning should be adjusted," in the textual analysis. For Saniya, teaching and learning as it stands, is ineffective. Reflecting on the Morrell quote and thinking about her school experiences, Saniya believes that students can become "obsessed with their grades and forget about mental health." I placed this quote in the processing analysis because as a teenager, Saniya understands how she and her peers can be negatively affected by the pressures of high school and forget to tend to their personal well-being. In the social analysis, Saniya offers possible solutions that can positively impact teaching and learning and make school a more balanced and fulfilling environment. She states, "Students should have more opportunities to write about what's important to them." Saniya understands the power of words and the benefits of learning in a space where your interests and experiences are validated and highly regarded. If students have more chances to engage in this type of criticality, they may gain additional agency and establish the balance they need personally and academically.

The second part of week 3 encouraged students to identify issues in their community they want to see change and improve. I analyze Elisa and Tyler's responses. Students touched on elements of historicity, problem-posing, and emancipatory criteria. Elisa's and Tyler's writing offers insight into varying issues that affect them, their families, and their community. Table 21 is below.

Table 21

Unit 2: Week 3 Community Concerns Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social analysis
Elisa	The amount of gas stations being built. What we need more than anything is a few more grocery stores	Why is there constant construction for gas stations?	I'm concerned for the people and environment with constant building of gas stations because

			people can't just live off of junk food.
Tyler	In my area there are a lot of potholes and trash on the side of the roads and you travel a bit to get to healthy food stores.	There is a lot of fast food options near my neighborhood.	The amount of times my mom had to swerve around potholes is uncountable and this really needs to be fixed.

Tyler and Elisa both discuss issues such as the plethora of potholes in the street and a desire for nearby healthy food options. As both students segue into the processing analysis section, Elisa questions the constant construction of gas stations in the community, and Tyler notes there are excessive fast-food options in the community. I placed these comments in the processing analysis because it signals that the students have begun to think about the history and current state of their community, and they have observed the changes in their surroundings over time. I placed the next statements in the social analysis because their commentary shows Tyler and Elisa's awareness are of different aspects of their community that could possibly present a problem for their health and well-being and the people around them in their environment. These observations and problem- posing constructions are the beginning steps to the students using their voices to address people in power for emancipation and to provoke positive change.

Unit 2: Week 4 CDA Analysis

Ms. G and I worked with the class to submit an email to the mayor of their city for the study's culminating task. In the email, we outlined the students' concerns and issues they believe need to change to improve their community. I provide more insight about this activity in Chapter 5. After completing the email, the students reflected on the overall study and shared their feelings about the assignments and activities throughout the two months. Below, I analyze Aaliyah and Elisa's responses. Eight of the students incorporate elements of dialogism,

historicity, problem-posing, emancipatory, and praxis criteria in their writing for this reflection activity. Aaliyah's and Elisa's response encapsulate and speak to the goals of the study and the progress these students experienced throughout the course of the eight weeks. Table 22 is below.

Table 22

Unit 2: Week 4 Student Reflection Activity

Student Pseudonym	Textual Analysis	Processing Analysis	Social Analysis
Aaliyah	I feel that this study really touched on some really unmentioned topics, and I'm glad I was able to voice my opinion about them.	I feel proud that my opinions was used and needed.	Hopefully my opinions will reach someone who could make the change I've been waiting/wanting for a long time.
Elisa	I really enjoyed reading about and watching videos on change, marginal assumptions.	I liked when we talked about change the most. I think this study should be an annual thing for our school and all grade levels.	We had the chance to share our thoughts out loud or on paper and sharing these things really helped me develop my opinions on a lot of things

Aaliyah and Elisa included the CCP elements in their reflections to describe the work we completed throughout the study and to describe what they gleaned as participants within the study. I placed Aaliyah's comment, "I'm glad I was able to voice my opinion," in the textual analysis section because it shows that she enjoyed one main purpose of the study- creating opportunities for the students to use their voice for agentive power. In the processing analysis, Aaliyah stated how she "feels proud that her opinion was used and needed." I wonder if Aaliyah feels proud because her opinion has often been ignored, or she feels as though her opinions were

invalid prior to this study. I hope this study strengthens her voice and gives her the wherewithal to value what she has to say. In the social analysis, Aaliyah makes statements hoping her opinions will reach someone who can make the changes she has wanted to see for a long time. I placed this comment in the social analysis section because Aaliyah has used each element of CCP to address the community-based inequities she has noticed for a “long time.” As a teenager, she is ready for positive change, and she has found a way to use her voice as a tool to advocate for the change she wants to see. The next student, Elisa, stated in the textual analysis that she “really enjoyed” the different activities we engaged in. I placed the following statement in the processing analysis, “I think this study should be an annual thing for our school and all grade levels.” I specifically note that she said, “all grade levels.” I appreciate Elisa’s point because it shows that she believes the study could be beneficial for *all* students in the school and would allow them to express their various concerns. For the social analysis section, I return to the concept of developing your agentive voice. Elisa said she was able to share her “thoughts out loud or on paper.” Subsequently, she was able to develop her opinion and process what issues she wanted to address. I believe this prompted Elisa to find her voice and develop the agency to harness power to speak up for change. Throughout the study, the students have been challenged to find and use their voices. Sometimes it will be spoken and other times it may be in a non-verbal format. I am intentional about providing Black students with opportunities to use their voices regardless of the format. Examining the students’ writing has allowed me to witness how the students received the study and how they capitalized on these activities to strengthen their agency and criticality.

CCP Progress Analysis

I now have a more profound understanding of the study’s impact on the students after

analyzing their writing artifacts. To provide additional analysis, I created tables that depict the CCP development and progress throughout the study. These tables highlight the number of times students included dialogism, historicity, problem-posing, emancipatory, and praxis elements in the weekly writing and reflection activities for each unit of study. Tables 23 and 24 are below.

Table 23

CCP Unit 1 Progress

Unit 1	Dialogism	Historicity	Problem-Posing	Emancipatory	Praxis
Week 1- Stereotypes		4	4	2	
Week 1- Reflection	2	1	2	2	
Week 2- School Perceptions		3	6		
Week 2- Reflection		6	5		
Week 3- Sentimental Value Item		5		4	2
Week 3- Reflection	4		1	7	
Week 4- Critical Moments Activity		4	4		

Table 24

CCP Unit 2 Progress

Unit 2	Dialogism	Historicity	Problem-Posing	Emancipatory	Praxis
Week 1- Societal Issues		7	7		
Week 2- Change			6	7	4
Week 3- Morrell Quote		3	8	8	
Week 3- Community		10	10	10	

Changes					
Week 4- Reflection	5	5	8	8	8

Reviewing the tables above helped me to understand the evolution of including CCP in the study's curriculum. I noticed that students mostly incorporated historicity and problem-posing in their writing and responses for Unit 1. Many of Unit 1's activities encouraged students to describe their identity and backgrounds. As they reflected on their lived experiences, they were also incited to acknowledge pervasive issues and problems in their communities and daily spaces of existence. Problem-posing was very high in week 2's assignment on "school perceptions." Students problematized the current school climate as many felt like school is mundane and boring. It was important for the students to not only reflect on their backgrounds and problem-pose, but to also explore the unique and intricate moments of their story that contribute to the special and valuable person they are. This exploration can be found in week 3's "sentimental value item" activity. Historicity was displayed in high numbers during that week as students provided in-depth accounts of their lived experiences. The students had poignant information to share, and as Elisa stated- as high school students, they now have more to share because their identity, individuality, and experiences are no longer "on the surface."

As I reviewed Unit 2's chart, I noticed how students still problem-posed in high numbers, but they also began to step into emancipatory and praxis-based writing. The students reflected on the Morrell quote and applied its meaning to their education. They began to confront some of the issues they notice in their educational experience and in their community. They engaged in emancipation because they recognized and addressed the systems and structures that have impeded their progress, their peers' progress, and the progress that needs to take place in their

environment. Finally, students engaged in an attempt at praxis when we as a class wrote the email to their city's mayor addressing their concerns. Before engaging in this action, students completed emancipatory work by identifying their city's mayor and the city's council members. Before finishing this activity, the students stated they did not know who their mayor was nor that these political figures' information was so easily accessible. Having this information is invaluable because the students now know how to locate people in power who can affect change in their community.

Critical Social Change Activity

Ms. G and I worked alongside the students to compose a letter to email their mayor. Within this letter, the students outlined their concerns, issues, and the problems they have observed in their community. We composed and submitted this letter together in class on the last day of the study. We compiled the students' concerns and included them in the construction of the letter. The students were an instrumental part of this letter because it encompassed their concerns. Even though I submitted the email, the information came directly from the students' writing, and their voices filled the letter. The mayor has not responded to the letter, but I will continue to pursue correspondence. The contents of the letter are in figure 2 on the next page.

Figure 2*Email to City Mayor*

Dear Mayor XXXXX,

My name is Brooks Salter. I am a teacher at XXXXX. I am also a doctoral student at Georgia State University in the School of Education. My research centers around critical literacy initiatives that help minoritized students cultivate their voices and strengthen their agency as they assess issues and topics they care about.

To conduct my research study, I collaborated with a fellow teacher and her 9th grade English/Language Arts class over the course of two months. One critical literacy activity prompted students to describe elements of the surrounding XXXXX area that stand out to them. The students outlined their concern for the dangerous potholes in the streets, loose pets on the streets, trash removal throughout the community, a desire for a nearby community center, and they also explained their desire for healthier food options and eateries in XXXXX.

What are city officials doing to address any of these concerns? What can city officials and XXXXX residents do to ensure that XXXXX families feel safe and supported? We look forward to your response.

Upon completion of this activity, the students reflected on the study and described their thoughts about the eight-week instructional design. Critical student responses such as “I feel proud that my opinions was used and needed,” “I think this study should be an annual thing for our school and all grade levels,” “We had the chance to share our thoughts out loud or on paper and sharing these things really helped me develop my opinions on a lot of things,” “Some of these activities have definitely changed my way of thinking and made me want to speak and share more ideas on how to improve schools and our community as a whole,” and “Hopefully my opinions will reach someone who could make the change I’ve been waiting/wanting for a long time,” encourage me as a teacher to continue to strive to create instructional opportunities for underserved Black high school students to strengthen their agentive power and use their voices to speak against community and societal issues.

The next chapter transitions from data analysis and examination of the findings to in-depth review of the overall research study. I reiterate the research questions and inquiry that have guided this study and reiterate the problem that initially drew me to this field of scholarship. I also explore additional meaning and analysis derived from the study's findings.

5 DISCUSSION

This study began with the purpose to collaborate with a fellow English teacher to document our process as we created opportunities for underserved Black high school students to write for critical social change. Much of my teaching career has been filled with students describing their disdain for school and the learning environment. As an ELA teacher, I believe students should see themselves and their cultural norms reverberated in the literature they read and the literacy activities they engage in. Through my postsecondary schooling, I was introduced to the power of critical literacy instruction and sociocultural models of teaching and learning. In creating this research study, I was motivated to blend a theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and critical composition pedagogy. Each of these concepts supports Black students to interrogate the status quo and to participate in meaningful coursework and conversation that honors their cultural norms. Many of the stories and lived experiences of Black students are often dismissed, and/or misrepresented in the curriculum. As Yosso (2005) explains, Black students have a “wealth of capital” that they bring to the classroom. This capital should be a part of curriculum plans as a genuine effort to make teaching and learning more inclusive and diverse.

Ensuring that Black students’ sociocultural norms are included in the classroom is one of the goals that brought me to this research, and one of the goals of my research and scholarship has been to support underserved Black high school students as they participate in instruction that uplifts their existence in the world. As stated in my literature review, I found an abundance of writing that focused on critical literacy instruction for Black students. However, I believe they do not present extant inquiry into Black students writing for impact in a way that confronts people in power with an objective to incite change on a macro level. As I arrive at this concluding point

in my study, I revisit my research questions and consider how they have influenced this work.

Again, my research questions are:

1. “What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?”
2. “What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?”
3. “How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?”

Throughout the study, I worked to respond to these questions honestly and explicitly as I collaborated with Ms. G to create critical literacy-based instruction, developed curriculum that was substantiated by sociocultural theories of learning, and analyzed the impact this instructional design had on the students. As we engaged in critical discourse about relevant and culturally responsive topics, both my teacher collaborator and student participants were galvanized to consider their perspectives and experiences and how these key moments shape their representation in society. The following three sections are titled teacher collaborator identities, instructional process- criticality and collaboration, and student impact. Each of these sections respond to the three research questions guiding this study.

Teacher Collaborator Identities

Again, the first research question is, “What are the beliefs, experiences, identities, and ideologies of two Black ELA teachers committed to social justice instruction?” Before the study, I was not privy to Ms. G’s background and interests. Throughout the preparation and implementation of the study, I found out Ms. G and I shared so much more than just a relationship as colleagues. I believe our family history and legacy as teachers served as an

immediate bond for us. Being around teachers all our lives has helped us understand how impactful a teacher can be in a child's life. Our additional shared identification as African Americans also united us. We both understand the plight and history of racism on our people in this country. With that understanding, we are both committed to imparting knowledge into our predominately Black student population about the pervasive racial and social issues that exist within our country. This commitment is then explored by including literature and lessons that help our students see themselves reflected in what they learn. I refer to Harris' (1992) work and reiterate a statement from her study; Harris states, "Learning about oneself and seeing one's culture affirmed would have a tremendous impact on motivation," (pg. 284). As social justice teachers, Ms. G and I value the importance of affirming our students' lived experiences and this inclusion, as evidenced by this study, positively impacted student motivation and engagement.

Acosta et al. (2018) describe how Black teachers positively impact their Black students and define this work as African American Pedagogical Excellence (AAPE). After reading their work, I understand how Ms. G and I embody this pedagogical excellence. Our teaching and learning practices encompass strengthening our Black students' lives through the literature we read, the topics we discuss, and the activities we assign. We understand the importance of following standards and district mandates, but we also remain true to our social-justice orientation. I believe it is important for instructors to truly align with social justice ideologies. I posit that Black students need teachers who not only include criticality in the classroom, but teachers who are fully committed to the personal work of criticality. That means we as teachers should incorporate criticality in our daily lives. We cannot tolerate injustice, and we must intentionally contribute to efforts that dismantle hegemonic and oppressive systems to make a better world for everyone. Acosta et al.'s "Affirmative View of African American Culture" tenet

is specifically found in Ms. G's and my teacher identity. Acosta states, "These teachers incorporate content that affirms culture(s) and history into classroom practice and link academic tasks to children and families' daily experiences and cultural life(s)," (pg. 343). Ms. G and I ensure our students know that we value them by linking their cultural experiences into the classroom culture through conversations about their interests and activities that reflect their lives. Including the students' interests in the curriculum is essential as we support students to engage in criticality with efforts to write for critical social change.

Coinciding with Ms. G's and my social justice orientation is our religious identification. As mentioned, Ms. G and I both identify as Christians which also united us. As I consider the depths of my faith, I believe my career as an educator is a predestined calling. In our initial interview, Ms. G stated, "I try my hardest to do what will be pleasing to Him (Jesus)." That statement resonates with me on many levels. As I survey Ms. G's and my career, I simultaneously think about our shared religious affiliation. These two areas co-exist because we are emboldened in our work as teachers with a desire to honor God by honoring and uplifting the young lives we reach. I am also reminded of Acosta and colleagues' (2018) Ethic of Care" tenet when I consider Ms. G's and my religion and our role as teachers. Acosta et al. describe this tenet as a "conceptualization of what does it mean to be a teacher to practical duties such as advocating, mentoring, cheerleading, supporting, and counseling," (pg. 343). We motivate our students to think critically, we value and appreciate them in a nation that often dismisses their worth because of the color of their skin, and we encourage the development of their agentic power as we support them to become progressive leaders. It should be an objective of teachers who care about their role in the classroom to extend that care to the students they interact with daily.

In my first and final interview with Ms. G, we discussed the concept of critical literacy. Ms. G's idea of critical literacy showed different meaning from the first interview to the final interview. In the first interview, Ms. G stated that critical literacy involves accurately teaching students and people the history of systemic issues such as racism. In the final interview, Ms. G noted that critical literacy should be purposed to "deal with tough topics, literature that analyzes the state of the world from different people's perspectives, literature that the students are able to relate to and see themselves in." Ms. G's different answers from the two interviews present a distinctive difference in her thoughts about critical literacy. I believe Ms. G's sentiment that critical literacy should include "literature that the students are able to relate to and see themselves in," is extremely poignant. If critical literacy instruction is to be effective and advantageous, it is necessary that our students see themselves in the curriculum content. While they should see themselves, our students can also learn about our cultural experiences as teachers and the experiences of their peers. Ms. G also mentioned that an objective for critical literacy instruction should be one that "critically analyzes what's happening in the world today." In the first interview, Ms. G described that she thought critical literacy instruction should accurately inform "students about systemic issues throughout history." The distinction in these two responses is crucial. While critical literacy instruction should discuss the history of issues such as racism and inequity, it should also be concerned with teaching students, and people everywhere, to critically analyze the divisive issues that are currently happening in the world today.

I revisit the work of Muhammad (2019) and hooks (2009) on critical literacy. Muhammad asserts that critical literacy instruction should "agitate," and hooks advocates for students to engage in meaningful dialogue that allows them to participate in critical conversations in the classroom. It is important that teachers remain informed about the societal

issues that exist in our world so we can challenge systems and motivate our students to express how they contend with these issues. As teachers collaborate and learn from one another, Black students, and allies alike, can be positioned to take part in discourse that investigates critical issues, which can empower us all to create initiatives that incite positive social change.

Conversely, teachers do not always share vast commonalities like Ms. G and I did. What does the collaborative relationship and professional learning community look like for these teachers? In chapter 2, I discussed Vicente's (2017) text and the focus on his school's collaboration where teachers come together to "share professional development interests, needs, or themes." It is important for teachers to invest time in sharing professional ideas to impact student achievement, but teachers can also improve their relationship with each other by creating opportunities to learn about each other's cultural norms and lived experiences. If we want students to be more culturally aware and sensitive, it is incumbent on us as educators to model that behavior. Also, how do our differences as individuals and instructors play out in the classroom? I believe it is important for teachers to exemplify ideals of respect and to appreciate each other's diversity to show students that we can learn from people who may have lived experiences that differ from our own. I also believe that we can encourage our students to celebrate and affirm each other's cultural norms as we incorporate our unique individuality and identity in our classroom environment. Discussing our own historicity, exploring examples and elements of our culture and traditions, and describing our own criticality development should be commonplace in the classroom. Teaching and learning can be propelled to a place where our similarities are acknowledged, but our differences can also be explored and included in our educational spaces to impact teacher relationships, teacher and student connectivity, and student to student interaction.

Instructional Process- Criticality and Collaboration

This study's second research question is, "What process do two Black ELA teachers engage in as they create social justice-oriented writing curriculum?" I liken Ms. G's and my instructional practice in this study to the work of Jocius and Woods (2013). I described their pedagogical practices in chapter 2 and highlighted their three C instructional method. Jocius and Woods' instructional method is beneficial for teachers who want to enhance criticality and critical thinking skills amongst teachers and students through culturally relevant texts, critical conversations, and collaboration. First, it is necessary for Black students to read culturally relevant texts that mirror their lived experiences. Ms. G and I specifically chose authors and texts that were reflective of the students and reflective of our interests as social-justice teachers.

Secondly, Morrell, much like Jocius and Woods, emphasizes critical conversations through the dialogism element of CCP. Ms. G and I incorporated this component in the study as we created activities that would allow us to engage in meaningful discourse with the students that is evident in their writing and responses. This teamwork can be transferred to the students as they are encouraged to learn from each other, celebrate each other's diversity, and work together to advocate for critical social change. Ms. G's and my goal to encourage the students to use their voice to advocate for critical social change required collaboration and dedication. As stated, I did not find extant literature on Black teachers collaborating for criticality. I also did not find extant literature on writing for critical social change outside of the classroom. However, I was inspired by the work of Powell et al. (2001) in "Saving Black Mountain," because this text represented a successful attempt at writing for critical social change to provoke change outside the classroom. Powell et al.'s study proves that writing for critical social change can be impactful and that

instructors can remind students of the agentive power they possess inside of them to effect change.

Again, I revisit my first and final interview with Ms. G to discuss responses that highlight the focus of this study and explore Ms. G's different responses from the beginning and end of the study. In my first interview with Ms. G, I asked about her thoughts on teacher collaboration in conjunction with instructional processes. She stated, "I found that I work much better alone. My anxiety doesn't allow me to think in a large group of people like, I can't function." Although she preferred to work alone, she mentioned that she understands the goal of teacher collaboration and that "we are a professional learning community." To that end, teacher collaborative planning has been situated within the paradigm of the professional learning community, and as Ms. G stated, "studies have shown that we learn best from one another, from working with people." I agree with Ms. G's point, and throughout my teaching career, I have been a part of several professional learning communities. However, I posit that PLCs should be structured to allow teachers to work together in collaborative sessions with a focus on enhancing engagement in the classroom. Too often, PLCs are created with the objective for teachers to use the same lessons and the same pedagogical format to help students pass benchmarks and standardized assessments. While student mastery is valuable, teachers must develop practical skills to become more efficient instructors who create engaging teaching activities. I revisit Riveros et al.'s (2012) work on PLCs and highlight their discussion on the efficiency of teachers' efforts.

Advocates of school reform have paid more attention to the goals of reform and how professional practices can be transformed to accomplish those goals, leaving aside the questions about the nature of teachers' professional knowledge in relation to their educational practices, (pg. 606).

Within the PLC setting, teachers should feel that collaboration is a liberating outlet as they share teaching strategies and helpful resources. Teachers' professional knowledge and classroom practices should target the needs of the students as we work together to heighten criticality development for each other and our students.

The topic of collaboration and instructional process was addressed again in my final interview with Ms. G. In this interview, she explained through our collaboration she gleaned different instructional strategies from me. Through collaboration, she discovered alternative and supplemental aids to infuse into the classroom. One instance of this discovery was in our lesson on Malala Yousafzai's life. Ms. G introduced me to Malala, but I found links and videos that Ms. G had never used before that she found could be useful for her instruction in the future. This realization leads me to believe that teacher collaboration is not solely rooted in discarding or removing your own unique teaching style. However, critical and effective teacher collaboration creates a space where teachers are equipped to learn from each other to diversify their skill set to better reach their students. It is possible for teachers to join forces to collaborate and enhance criticality in the classroom. Subsequently, the overall school climate should follow this same goal.

Professional learning communities at Literacy High are led by teachers and administrative personnel, and as Ms. G stated about the expectations of teacher collaboration, "We are expected to work in groups of people, I certainly do that. I have a great team that I work with, and I do learn from them." As I reflect on Ms. G's statement, I think about how teacher collaboration and the instructional process can be mutually beneficial for the adults and the students in educational spaces. What are teachers and administrative leaders doing to ensure that all students feel represented both socially and culturally? What precepts guide this professional

learning community? How are teachers using their classroom to make connections with each other and the students? How can teacher collaboration and the instructional process be constructed to address the societal issues that impact our world? These questions should be considered as we embrace diversity in our classrooms and promote social justice for all.

Promoting criticality in the classroom is a necessary practice if we want to expose students to critical literacy instruction that can possibly inspire them to become change agents in their community. Through this agentic growth, students can incite positive change in society and work to dismantle oppressive structures, but this requires a commitment to criticality from their instructors. Behizadeh, Thompson-Smith, and Miller (2021) documented the teaching practices of a student teacher and her attempts to include CCP elements into the curriculum for her students. In one instance, student teacher, Maryam, implemented a text on Martin Luther King, Jr. to include more culturally relevant literature for the students to read. The authors note, “Maryam possessed seeds for CCP that could take root and eventually blossom into enactment of CCP with resources, collaboration with critical colleagues, and continued professional learning centered on criticality. Yet these supports were not evident at her placement,” (pg. 196). As I have stated, critical pedagogy and criticality development are missing in the curriculum choices in our schools. Teachers who strive to implement these educational initiatives are often met with opposition from administration and scripted curriculum mandates. We also contend with high stakes testing benchmarks that further restrict criticality teaching and learning. Teachers must work together to infuse criticality-based instruction into the classroom if we want to enhance our students’ reading of the word and the world. Also, we need the support and participation of educational leaders and stakeholders to help strengthen curriculum goals that are rooted in criticality.

I believe the collaborative work teachers engage in must be intentional, and some of that focus should include realistic conversations with each other, and students, about lived experiences and cultural norms. Also, it is extremely important to create opportunities as colleagues and teachers to promote criticality development- especially as we contend with legislation that seeks to eliminate curricula and communication that explores the social and political issues of the past and present. As I consider these questions and the possibilities of teacher collaboration, I reflect on some of the processes in my collaboration with Ms. G. Our collaboration could have been improved if I created a moment for Ms. G to interview me. I learned significant information about her experiences and her process for creating lessons, but I did not intentionally create opportunities for her to ask me questions about my process for curriculum creation. She learned about our similarities and differences because I would interject and describe how much we had in common, or briefly explain how I plan lessons, but these moments were informal. Also, during our class sessions, Ms. G and I could have included more of our perceptions about our high school experiences to enhance the dialogue and discourse with the students. These forms of dialogism could have fostered additional criticality development for both the teachers and students.

Student Impact

This study's third research question is, "How are students impacted by engaging in instruction designed to support writing for critical social change?" Ernest Morrell (2004) states that critical literacy, in part, is "sustaining revolutionary discourse through composers with the courage and confidence to contribute commentary and contestation in chaotic times." My study analyzed the impact of critical literacy instruction. Specific literature that I reviewed in Chapter 2

increased my knowledge of criticality research and the need for increased criticality in the teaching and learning process which impacts students and their engagement in the classroom.

The literature I reviewed in preparation for my study implemented critical literacy instruction that impacted students in distinctive and powerful ways. Reading works like Baker-Bell et al.'s (2017) study, showed how the student participants dissected media portrayals of Black people that further perpetuated biased stereotypes. Everett's "Untold Stories" (2018) highlighted the academic pursuits of a Black high school teenager, Shawn. Shawn used his writing skills to discuss how displeased he was with his school experience. Frankel's (2016) study emphasized sociocultural learning theory. In this work, students were incited to read literature that related to their lived experiences and then complete writing activities that allowed them to reflect on their identity and what is important to them. I learned from each of these texts, and I implemented similar components of critical literacy in my study that connect to the focus of research question two (instructional process) and three (student impact).

In conjunction with the critical literacy literature I read, I was impressed to employ Morrell's Critical Composition Pedagogical (CCP) framework as this study's curriculum guide because I believed each tenet of this framework would allow the students to consider the past, the present, and challenge them to work to positively impact the future. The students examined historical moments that affected people of color, but they were also encouraged to examine their own personal histories. Through these historicity-based lessons, they then engaged in meaningful dialogism, either verbally or nonverbally, that allowed them to survey their lives. It was my goal to create a space for students to explore their capital and cultural wealth. They were supported as they examined the positives and negatives, the good and the bad of their lived experiences. As they participated in these exchanges, we then worked towards critical agitation. What is change?

What needs to be changed in the community? Who are the people who can help create the change we want to see? These questions and considerations illuminated the problem-prososing, emancipatory, and the attempt at praxis as we ended the study by writing the letter to the city mayor that included the students' concerns.

The student participants used their voices to speak to the issues they see and encounter daily. As I examined and analyzed the students' writing, I noticed how the student participants became more invested in sharing their thoughts. Each activity pushed them to think about issues such as a desire for healthier food options in their community, the need for a nearby community center, road reconstruction, and neighborhood improvements such as sufficient street lighting. They were able to process what action needs to be taken in specific places around them and why this action is necessary for the improvement of their community. They also gained critical knowledge about various people who look like them and who have had similar experiences like them but took action to address problems and provoke change.

Although Unit 2 supported the students as they spoke to the critical social change they want to see, the activities in Unit 1 encouraged them to celebrate and reflect on the beauty of their individualized stories and unique lived experiences. One of the critical activities in Unit 1 directed the students to describe their perspective on school and to specifically describe their point of view as high school students at Literacy High School. Several of the students defined school as a place where they do not want to be, and that each day follows a repeated pattern that leaves them disinterested. They view Literacy High School as a place where they have no say in the direction of their education in a confined environment where adults enforce arbitrary rules on them.

As I analyzed the students' writing, it became clear that they felt a sense of autonomy and fulfillment by participating in this study. I recall various student participants' comments. Aaliyah stated, "I feel that this study really touched on some really unmentioned topics, and I'm glad I was able to voice my opinion about them." Riyah stated, "I was glad to see that someone, anyone, cared about my opinion." John Stamos stated, "These situations that I got to read about and listen to has given me an inspiration to help my community as much as I can." Elisa stated, "I think this study should be an annual thing for our school and all grade levels." Mathias stated, "Some of the activities have definitely changed my way of thinking and made me want to speak and share more ideas on how to improve schools and our community as a whole." Based on these responses, student impact resulted in emancipatory and agency development. As Morrell states, emancipation is defined by, "encouraging students to confront oppression and social injustice." Through their writing, the students used their voices to speak to issues and injustices which enhanced their sense of power and authority. They also enhanced their sense of criticality because they were able to identify the issues that affect them, and they addressed these issues in our attempt to confront a figure in power.

Throughout the study, the students amplified their social and cultural identities. The student writing revealed how they became more comfortable telling their stories as they saw themselves reflected in the curriculum. They described how they were able to critically think about their lived experiences in conjunction with their experiences in their community. They provided detailed accounts about their passions and values and what fuels their individuality. Also, as burgeoning critical change agents, they spoke to the improvements and adjustments they want to see in their environment. Considering each of these elements and the results of their writing, the most prevalent sign of student impact was found in the students using their voice and

agency to celebrate their cultural norms, lived experiences, and advocate for change. In turn, the students were also impacted by increased criticality, positive identity development, and increased engagement. As stated, the students' mayor did not respond to the email we sent. Although the students did not completely provoke critical social change within the study's culminating activity, they were able to sharpen their praxis orientation. They used their voices to strengthen their power. With this power, they are equipped to advocate for continued critical social change.

I now return to the first and final interview I conducted with Ms. G. During my first and final interview with Ms. G, we discussed student engagement in English coursework. During our first interview, Ms. G stated that she believes students would be more engaged in the English classroom if the literature were more relevant and represented more of their cultural experiences. As Ms. G examined several of the student work samples, she identified that their submissions were thoughtful and showed critical depth. Ms. G noted that students gave positive feedback about the activities which revealed they enjoyed participating in the eight-week study. They even mentioned that they "didn't want the study to end." Hearing Ms. G describe the students' favorable responses highlights the impact of the study and our plan to make teaching and learning a more critically engaging and relative experience. The students engaged in consistent writing throughout the study. One sign of student impact I noticed throughout the study was an increase in overall depth of writing. Students like, John Stamos, who began the study with minimal writing responses ended the study with more robust writing responses. As mentioned, he felt "inspired to do as much for my community as I can," by participating in the study. Also, one of the greatest responses was the high level of engagement and motivation students showed in the writing activities over the course of the eight weeks. I believe the students' level of engagement speaks to the idea that teaching and learning can be fulfilling when curricula is

relevant and relatable to students.

Discussion on CDA Analysis Framework

I employed Fairclough's (1995) CDA tool to analyze the students' writing and examine student impact based on their writing artifacts. The CDA analysis method was instrumental in my examination of their writing. The use of this framework aligned with question three's inquiry as I examined how the students were impacted by engaging in the curriculum. Looking across students' writing, many of them addressed the dynamic of power and how they are affected by different forces that control or limit their search for autonomy and freedom. One of the dominant features of Critical Discourse Analysis is the challenge to analyze how language speaks to social issues such as racism and oppression. Throughout their writing, students addressed school-related issues such as the constraints of what they are required to learn, the disconnection between school leaders and students, and their overall apathy towards school. As the students continued to write, they transitioned from school to outside spaces such as the ills in their community like pollution and food scarcity. Examining their writing through CDA's textual, processing, and social analysis model, I was able to understand how the students view themselves and how they view the world around them. As teenagers, they constantly evaluate their environment and seek to establish their independence and self-worth in a country that does not always value and esteem Black people's existence. As mentioned, Fairclough's (1995) CDA approach to analysis combines "modes of interaction, representation, and ways of being," (pp. 21-22). It was important that I explore how the students interact with the world and explore how internal and external factors influence their worldview and perspective as I read and interpreted their writing. Looking at their writing through the CDA lens provided greater context as I gained more insight into the students' identity and concerns. I reiterate Christensen's (2017) work. Her

curriculum choices challenged students to “talk back” to social, racial, and class inequality and to develop agency as they confronted issues such as “racial injustice, class exploitation, and gentrification,” (p. 17). Using the CDA method helped me synthesize how my student participants “talked back” to some of the same issues outlined in Christensen’s work and how they used their voices to address issues they care about.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Janks’ (2013) “Critical Literacy in Teaching and Research” was framed with questions such as “How can education contribute to a world in which our students at all levels of education become agents for change?” My study had a similar inquiry as I was also interested in supporting students write for critical social change. In Janks’ study, she also used a cyclical framework for critical analysis. In this framework, students and teachers identified an issue, problematized it, and then renamed it as they sought solutions to that issue. Although useful, this cyclical process differed from my critical analysis framework. In my use of CDA, I examined the students’ writing to investigate what their separate lived experiences revealed about their world outlook and perspectives. Through my implementation of CDA, I was able to understand how the students’ writing explored issues that were uniquely important to them, how their representation in the world was impacted these issues, and how they cultivate their agency to speak against these issues. Our attempt to write for critical social change was not fully accomplished because the students’ mayor did not respond to the letter we created, and no official change occurred. However, through my CDA analysis, I noticed how the students changed and how their identity development and criticality enhanced. With this growth, they are positioned to continue to advocate for potential change.

Recommendations

For any future implementation of this study or a similar study, I recommend that students have more opportunities to work closely in pairs and/or groups for various assignments and activities within the teaching and learning process. Singer and Shagoury's (2005) study presented a successful attempt at students cooperatively engaging in critical literacy-based activities that promote criticality development. I believe students participating in partnered activities would stimulate fascinating critical discourse on systemic issues the students observe and encounter. At the time of this study, the pandemic limited activities that would require students to be near each other. Group tasks could have potentially put students at risk of spreading the virus, and everyone was required to adhere to social distance guidelines due to widespread COVID-19 regulations. I also think future implementation of this study would benefit from local politicians and social activists coming to the classroom, speaking to the student participants, and answering their questions and concerns about improving the community. The participation of these key figures could help students become familiar with community leaders and adults outside of the school, and the students could potentially become inspired to pursue careers in public service. The inclusion of these figures could also be instrumental in provoking some critical social change. In my study, we did not fully reach the critical social change we attempted with the letter and email we submitted to the students' mayor. If students had a chance to speak directly to a community stakeholder who visited their class, there may possibly be an opportunity for change to occur through this form of communication. At the time of this study, field trips were suspended throughout school districts, but in a future study, a visit to the Center for Civil and Human Rights would help give students a

historical, visual, and kinesthetic depiction of racism, discrimination, and agitation of uniformity in this country.

Collecting field notes and observational data during the class sessions presented an obstacle that I did not foresee before the study began. Throughout each class session, I did not take field notes. During that time, I was either instructing, assisting Ms. G with handing out assignments, or assisting students complete the tasks within the allotted time for the study. I spent 30 to 35 minutes with the class to complete each week's lesson and activities, so the instructional time was not extensive. Additionally, due to the COVID mask mandates, the class session recordings are muffled and do not fully capture the depth of in-class discourse which were encapsulated in the analysis of the student writing artifacts. As COVID restrictions are lifted, I think students would benefit from more specific opportunities to share their writing with the class and orally present their work much like the students in Sepúlveda's (2011) study who presented critical responses to the issues they contended with.

Within the study's final task, we emailed a letter to the city mayor addressing the students' concerns and issues. The mayor has yet to respond to the email. However, I will continue to pursue correspondence. In a future study, I recommend the students identify additional public figures and community stakeholders who they could contact to address their concerns. Ms. G and I promoted the students having multimodalities to express themselves. In a future study, I would recommend that students advocate for social change through various mediums. We sent an email for this specific study. Students could create pamphlets, websites, illustrations, and videos to advocate for critical social change.

How Do We Navigate the Work of Criticality?

It is essential that both in-service and pre-service teachers learn how to navigate and pushback against controversial laws such as HB1084. I include pre-service teachers in this strategic action because it is these individuals who will be charged with leading future classrooms and supporting students who represent the diversity embodied in this country. Approaching the work of creating criticality curriculum is necessary, but as educators consider legislation such as HB1084, we must implement criticality-based instruction in a specific way that does not threaten our professional livelihood. So how do we navigate the work of criticality? Pollock et al. (2022) define lawful resistance as “backup,” and I align with these forms of resistance. This descriptive “backup” is inclusive of “subspace backup, school leader backup, and system backup,” (p. 97). Subspace backup espouses criticality through after school clubs and organizations that still promote efforts aimed at supporting diversity and challenging societal ills. Teachers can also turn to allies such as school leadership/administration who promote criticality development in their schools and can vouch for teachers’ efforts. System backup refers to tapping into systemic aid such as foundational laws (1st amendment) and teacher unions that can help protect teachers’ lawful resistance. Combating governmental sanctions can be challenging, but it is possible as we identify various entities and verbiage that can support the cause for criticality in and outside the classroom. The collaborative work Ms. G and I engaged in supported criticality development despite the looming threat of HB1084 legislation. It was important that we create space and opportunity to construct curriculum that tackled hard topics that impact our lives and our students’ lives. As research and curriculum that mirrors my study are created, it is imperative that researchers and educators establish their own “backup” to best navigate the necessary work of criticality.

Conclusion

As stated, critical pedagogy is missing in schools across the country. Current day legislation and education reform want to silence the voices of teachers and students who are committed to teaching and learning about critical topics such as racism, oppression, and discrimination. It is vitally important for teachers to engage in social justice-oriented instruction to help our students have opportunities to expand their criticality and identity development, understand the importance of engaging in critical literacy, and become charged to advocate for critical social change in their communities.

Critical pedagogy and critical literacy instruction can be implemented in US classrooms in many ways. One specific way is through teacher collaboration. Collaboration initiates a space for teachers to join forces and create effective and critical teaching and learning practices that reach students. Teachers who combine their skills to invoke criticality in the classroom can enhance the instructional environment to engage students' reading of words and the world. As teachers collaborate to strengthen criticality development in students, they can also participate in the work to strengthen their own criticality. Cultivating curriculum that supports active exchanges through dialogue and instruction about lived experiences, cultural capital, and ways to dismantle systems of oppression can incite relevance and engagement in the classroom for both teachers and students.

At the beginning of my study, the student participants asserted they found school to be boring and uninteresting. As evidenced by my data analysis and findings, the student participants responded to the activities by actively describing issues they care about that connect to their experiences and existence. Through these activities, they felt empowered and used their voice to broaden their sense of identity, criticality, engagement, and agency. The results of this study

remind me this work is imperative, and my study is important and needed. Through this work, I have contributed to research inquiry and scholarship that addresses contemporary issues that impact the stability and function of our society. Additionally, these issues affect the state of education and the roles of teachers and students in classrooms every day. We must discuss these issues and work to inform young minds about how they can become change agents who push back against racist and discriminatory legislation and ills. As Rymes (2009) states, “Appreciating, and understanding what a child says is the first step to appreciating and understanding who a child is and, in turn, helping that child learn and grow in a classroom,” (pg. 12). Students who feel appreciated and understood by their teachers often develop skills that can take criticality and critical literacy instruction from classroom objectives to societal impact and change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teacher Informed Consent Form

I am a student at Georgia State University. I am conducting a research project that involves the construction of writing instruction with one English teacher as we seek to be informed about teaching that supports Black high school students in writing for social change. I am requesting for you to be included as a co-collaborator for this project. This project will begin in September 2021 and end in November 2021. However, you and I will meet throughout the study to review instruction and reflect on classroom activities. Before we begin the study, you and I will complete an interview about your teaching philosophy, autobiographical information, your background as a student, and your instructional goals. In this project, students will complete activities that allow them to write about social issues. We will look at notes from the student writing samples completed during the study. You will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. The written report of this project will include the notes from observations, information from classroom activities, and information from the student writing samples. You, the project's board members at Georgia State University, and I, will view the final written report. These files will be viewed as a part of the review of my research study and final project. Your name and all other information will be kept private. The name of the school or the school district will not be included in the final report. You have the right to review any materials related to the project. Your request will be honored within a rational period after the request is received.

Brooks Salter
Georgia State University
bsalter2@student.gsu.edu

Nadia Behizadeh, Ph.D.
(she/they pronouns)
Associate Professor of Adolescent Literacy
College of Education and Human Development
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If you agree to participate in this research, please complete the information below:

Participant's Name (Please Print)

Participant's Signature

Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

September 7, 2021

Dear (Parent/Guardian),

I am a student at Georgia State University. I am conducting a research project that involves the construction of writing instruction with one English teacher as we seek to be informed about teaching that supports Black high school students in writing for social change. I am requesting your permission to include your child to be a part of this project. This project will begin in September of 2021 and end in November of 2021. The project will involve classroom observations and students will complete activities that allow them to write about social issues. Classroom activities will be audio-recorded. I will look at notes from the classroom observations and student writing samples completed during the study. This study is not designed to benefit student participants personally. Overall, I hope to gain information about high school students writing about issues that are important to them and their community. In this study, students will not have any more risks than they would in a normal day of life. I am asking your permission to collect the following classroom documents that will be a part of the research study and only used for research purposes: student writing samples and classroom observation notes. Student writing samples will include topics that allow the students to write about their lives, their school and community, and the issues they observe. There are no additional documents needed to complete this research study. The written report of this project will include the notes from my observations, information from classroom activities, and information from the student writing samples. The English teacher I work with during this project, the project's board members at Georgia State University, and I, will view the students' classroom documents, that are a part of the study, and the final written report. These documents will be viewed as a part of the review of my research study and final project. Your child's name and all other information will be kept private. The name of your child's school and the school district will not be included in the final report. Your child is not required to be a part of this project. Your child will not lose any benefits if you decide that he/she will not be a part of this research project. If your child decides to be in this project, he/she may quit at any time without loss of benefits. You have the right to review any materials related to the project. Your request will be honored within a rational period after the request is received.

Brooks Salter
Georgia State University
bsalter2@student.gsu.edu

Nadia Behizadeh, Ph.D.
(she/they pronouns)
Associate Professor of Adolescent Literacy
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
nbehizadeh@gsu.edu

If you agree to allow your child to be in this research, please complete the information below:

Parent/Guardian's Name (Please Print)

Appendix C: Student Assent Form

September 7, 2021

Title: Collaborating for Criticality: Action-Based Critical Literacy Writing Instruction for Secondary Black Students

Investigator: Brooks Salter

We are doing a research study about teachers working together to instruct and support Black high school students in writing for social change. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to participate in classroom discussions and to write about community and social issues that are important to you. Also, the study will take place over the course of nine weeks. During the study, I will observe the class and classroom activities. When we are finished with this study, we will write a report about what was learned. This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information about high school students writing about issues that are important to you and your community. In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. This report will not include your name or that you were in the study. You do not have to be in this study, and your parent(s)/legal guardian(s) cannot make you be in it. If you decide to stop after we begin, that is okay too. You can stop being in the study at any time, and no one will be upset if you decide not to be in the study. Your parents/guardian also know about the study. Please return this form by September 13, 2021.

If you decide you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

(Sign your name here)

(Date)

Appendix D: Teacher Collaborator Interview Questionnaire

1. Describe what motivated you to become a teacher.
2. What is your teaching philosophy?
3. How do you prepare and plan the lessons for the specific content(s) you teach?
4. How would you describe the process and purpose of teacher collaboration?
5. As a teacher, explain any memorable moments you have had with your students. Explain why these moments are significant to you.
6. How do you define literacy?
7. Are you familiar with critical literacy? If so, explain what you know about critical literacy.

Appendix E: Teacher Collaborator Reflection Interview Questionnaire

1. What are your thoughts on the teacher collaboration we engaged in during the study?
2. How would you describe the students' responses and the results of their work in the study?
3. How would you describe your understanding of critical literacy now that the study has ended?
4. After looking at the students work, do you think socially and culturally relevant teaching and learning are necessary for black high school students? Describe your thoughts.

Appendix F: Unit 1 CCP Matrix

Unit 1	Dialogism	Historicity	Problem-Posing	Emancipatory	Praxis
Week 1- Stereotypes		Aaliyah Djeene JohnStamos Mathias	Aaliyah Djeene John Stamos Mathias	Aaliyah Djeene	
Week 1- Reflection	Aaliyah Djeene	Djene	Kiara Aaliyah	Aaliyah Djeene	
Week 2- School Perceptions		Aaliyah Elisa Tyler	Aaliyah Ayanna Elisa Mathias Saniya Tyler		
Week 2- Reflection		Aaliyah Ayanna JohnStamos Riyah Saniya Tyler	Ayanna John Stamos Mathias Riyah Saniya		
Week 3- Sentimental Value Item		Ayanna Kiara Mathias Nyla Riyah		Ayanna Mathias Nyla Riyah	Nyla Riyah
Week 3- Reflection	Aaliyah Ayanna Saniya Elisa		Gumball	Aaliyah Ayanna Gumball Elisa John Clark Saniya Tyler	
Week 4- Critical Moments		Aaliyah John Clarke Mathias Saniya	Aaliyah Elisa Mathias Saniya		

Appendix G: Unit 2 CCP Matrix

Unit 2	Dialogism	Historicity	Problem-Posing	Emancipatory	Praxis
Week 1- Societal Issues		Ayanna	Ayanna		
		John Clark	Djeene		
		Djeene	Elisa		
		Mathias	Mathias		
		Riyah	Nyla		
		Saniya	Riyah		
		Tyler	Saniya		
Week 2- Change			Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah
			Djeene	Djeene	Mathias
			Mathias	Gumball	Riyah
			Riyah	Mathias	Tyler
			Tyler	Riyah	
			John Stamos	Tyler	
				John Stamos	
Week 3- Morrell Quote		Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Elisa
		Elisa	Elisa	Elisa	Tyler
		Riyah	John Stamos	John Stamos	
			Kiara	Kiara	
			Mathias	Mathias	
			Riyah	Riyah	
			Saniya	Saniya	
			Tyler	Tyler	
Week 3- Community Changes			Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah
			Djeene	Djeene	Djeene
			Elisa	Elisa	Elisa
			Gumball	Gumball	Gumball
			John Stamos	John Stamos	John Stamos
			Kiara	Kiara	Kiara
			Mathias	Mathias	Mathias
			Riyah	Riyah	Riyah
			Saniya	Saniya	Saniya
			Tyler	Tyler	Tyler
Week 4- Study Reflection	Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah	Aaliyah
	Ayanna	Ayanna	Ayanna	Ayanna	Ayanna
	Elisa	Gumball	Elisa	Elisa	Elisa
	Mathias	JohnClarke	Gumball	Gumball	Gumball
	Riyah	JohnStamos	John Clarke	John Clarke	John Clarke
			John Stamos	John Stamos	JohnStamos
			Mathias	Mathias	Mathias
			Riyah	Riyah	Riyah

Appendix H: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Aliyah - 9/21/21 3rd period

Dangers of a Single Story Video

1. What is a stereotype? What do you think happens when stereotypes are created and placed on groups of people?

A stereotype is a fixed idea about a certain group of people. People have a single mindset about those people and judge them without knowing them fully.

2. What specific problems/issues does the video's speaker describe?

She describes the results of people creating single stories based off what they see, and thinking that apply's everywhere.

3. As the speaker explains, what exactly is the danger of a single story?

The danger is people assume things based on what they saw or heard without the truth.

Appendix I: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Djere

Directions: Respond to the prompt below.

Identify and describe the stereotypes and/or single story ideas that are often placed on you and your peers/fellow teenagers. How do these stereotypes make you feel? Who do you think places these stereotypes and labels on you and your peers? How do you think power plays a role in the creation of stereotypes?

A stereotype that is often placed on me is that I'm "white washed". This single story don't make me feel good about myself because it's not true. These stereotypes are usually placed on me by my black "friends" or other black people that barely know me. I don't like the term "you act white" or "white washed" because it creates the stereotype that you can act a certain race.

Appendix J: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Aaliyah

Weekly Reflection

- Describe/explain your thoughts on this week's activities.
This week's activity gave me a better
understanding on how stereotypes and impact
someone's mindset, and feelings towards
something, or someone.
- Do you think other high school students like you would benefit from the activities we completed this week? Why or why not?
I like a lot of high school students would
benefit from these activities because its
giving them a chance to express their
feelings about the topics we talk about.
- Is there anything that stood out to you from this week's activities? Please explain your thoughts below.
What stood out to me was hearing the different
stereotypes from my classmates, and learning
more about how some can really be dangerous

Appendix K: Student Work Artifact

09-21

A

Name/Date Saniya

Weekly Reflection

1. Describe/explain your thoughts on this week's activities.

This week's activity was centered around stereotypes. I personally enjoyed this activity. I feel like it really expanded my thinking. Although, I had trouble in the beginning trying to figure out what stereotypes I group with, in the end I realized I group with more than I would've liked.

2. Do you think other high school students like you would benefit from the activities we completed this week? Why or why not?

I do not think many of my peers would benefit from this activity. Although I was able to change my thinking, not all high schoolers care enough to try and change their views.

3. Is there anything that stood out to you from this week's activities? Please explain your thoughts below.

Something that stood out in this activity was the question "Are all stereotypes negative?" Before doing this activity, I would've answered no. Now I am able to understand that they are all negative because we shouldn't automatically group someone without knowing their individuality.

Appendix L: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Tyler, the (Polar)

Unit 1: Week 2

1. After reading the excerpt from the book, what stands out to you. Please explain in detail.

Something that stands out to me is how even the teachers are tired and bored. The teacher is supposed to be the most excited person in the classroom but because they aren't this caused the students to become bored.

2. As a student at *Literacy High, * how do you feel about this school and your daily school experiences? Explain your thoughts with a descriptive response.

I feel like every day is the same, go to 1st period, finish my work and fall asleep, do the same thing in 2nd period then do a ton of boring busy work in 3rd and have fun with my friends in gym class.

3. Explain how virtual learning has impacted your thoughts and feelings about school. Also, describe in detail how virtual learning has affected you and your peers' interactions with each other and the teachers/administrators in the school building.

Virtual learning was not really a problem for me. My peers on the other hand have seem to hate it. They say things like "I feel like I wasn't learning" or "I was sad that I couldn't see my friends."

Appendix M: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Elisa

Unit 1: Week 2

1. After reading the excerpt from the book, what stands out to you. Please explain in detail.

Even for the best students school can be boring. It also doesn't leave a lot of room to relate things we learn to everyday things that students do outside of school.

2. As a student at "Literacy High," how do you feel about this school and your daily school experiences? Explain your thoughts with a descriptive response.

School to me is a headache. For most of my periods I'm very quiet. 2nd period is the only time I actually enjoy being in school. This school is okay I just think it takes alot out of students and teachers.

3. Explain how virtual learning has impacted your thoughts and feelings about school. Also, describe in detail how virtual learning has affected you and your peers' interactions with each other and the teachers/administrators in the school building.

Virtual learning made me realize that school is really watered down. Especially when teachers really want to teach something else but can't because it doesn't go with the lesson plan. I think virtual learning made a lot of people including me lazy. Most of us did the bare minimum. So we could get at least a C to get to the next grade.

Appendix N: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Mathias 10/1/21 83Weekly Reflection

1. Reflect on this week's reading passage and activity. What immediate thoughts come to your mind when you think about school?

That school has gotten boring as I've grown over the years. I used to love school for the academics and learning but now the only things that really excite me are my friends or people at school. School doesn't encourage me to learn, I just know that I need to.

2. What do you think could possibly happen if students, including you and your peers, had consistent opportunities to discuss and explain your honest thoughts about school with teachers and administrators?

I think that over time schools would start to add things that keep students interested in actually learning and create more learning paths that are individualized. This would help student improve and master skills that they enjoy using, making it easier to find a job or career to pursue.

Appendix O: Stunt Work Artifact

Name/Date: AyannaWeekly Reflection

1. Reflect on this week's reading passage and activity. What immediate thoughts come to your mind when you think about school?

I feel pretty bummed out whenever I think about school. School, in my opinion, is more like a chore than anything else. I don't particularly enjoy waking up early every day to learn about things that I'm not interested in. I can relate to the kids in the reading regarding their disinterest in school.

2. What do you think could possibly happen if students, including you and your peers, had consistent opportunities to discuss and explain your honest thoughts about school with teachers and administrators?

I think schools would improve from consistent student feedback. Not only that, but our relationships with our teachers would grow if we had something to discuss outside of the curriculum. I'd like if we had more chances to share our ideas for new programs, clubs, etc.

Appendix P: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Eli Sg

1. What do you think the speaker cherishes and values in "I, Too?"

I think the author values their skin color and also the
fact that just because he's black doesn't mean he is not
American. and that he is capable of knowing self worth.

2. Think about the time period that Langston Hughes lived in and think about his audience. What could the line, "Tomorrow, I'll be at the table when company comes," symbolize and mean for the readers of this poem in 1925?

Knowing Langston Hughes' audience, he wrote this line saying
in the future black people in America will be equal to white
Americans. and that it won't be long till it happens.

3. In "Meditation II," Amal states, "the letter on his desk lets him know that he is human." What emotions and feelings do you think he experiences as he reads the letter?

I think Amal feels relief knowing that someone still
believes in the real him and not the made up Amal that got
locked up.

4. The line, "I feel I feel I feel," uses the literary device of repetition. What effect does this repeated phrase create?

The repeated phrase is meant to give the effect that he is still
human and although now labeled as a criminal he still has
feelings.

Appendix Q: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Nyle

1. Describe the item you cherish and value. How did you receive it? Explain the attachment you have to this item.

An item I cherish is my first pair of dance shoes my grandad bought me before he passed. This item means alot me and my grandad were very close we did everything together

2. Assign three words to this item. Choose one of the words, and in a detailed response, explain how this word aligns with your item and any related feelings you may have.

1. Purpose
2. Emotional
3. Motivation

I'm always a little emotional because I wish we had more time together. He supported everything I wanted to do. He would even help me learn things I didn't know. When holding my shoes it just helps me keep going and never give even though it makes me sad.

Appendix R: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Rygh Bridgman 10/5/21

- Describe the item you cherish and value. How did you receive it? Explain the attachment you have to this item.

This item is a ring, it's my grandmother's ring that was given to my mom after she passed. The ring was her wedding ring, it's gold with small diamonds around the ring, a few diamonds are missing but I think it's still pretty. It's basically me and my sisters' offer our grandpa it too... I don't want it. It makes me feel closer to that grand mother I didn't know.

- Assign three words to this item. Choose one of the words, and in a detailed response, explain how this word aligns with your item and any related feelings you may have.

- Pretty
- gold
- Heirloom

The was beautiful really you could see how it looked from my grandmother's wedding photo. I believe it's precious like if I don't get one like it I don't even want it. Gold, because the base of the ring was a pretty gold, you could really tell by the photo since it was black and white. Now it's like a shiny gold. It's now a family heirloom, that I hope will be passed down through generations.

Appendix S: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Elisa

Week 3 Reflection

1. How do you think this week's "show and tell activity" could possibly impact teacher and student relationships if it were a part of regular high school English/Language Arts lessons?

I think that having a show and tell activity could show how teenagers feel and show appreciation to little things in life. Most students did show and tell as kids in K-5th grade when emotions were just on the surface, but now that we're all older I think doing a show and tell would have a good impact on teacher student relationships.

2. Are you more comfortable sharing your thoughts and ideas on paper versus sharing your thoughts and ideas aloud in a class discussion? Explain your answer in detail and describe why you feel this way.

I'm more comfortable putting my thoughts and ideas on paper. I don't like to talk out loud in front of a lot of people because it makes me nervous and because I like having my thoughts together and not having to come up with words on the spot. I also like putting my thoughts on paper because I like writing. I feel this way because writing on paper is most comfortable to me.

Appendix T: Student Work Artifact

Methia

found it up to my standards as a romantic novel. She opened the first page and I heard poetry for the first time in my life. "It was the best of times and the worst of times ..." Her voice slid in and curved down through and over the words. She was nearly singing. I wanted to look at the pages. Were they the same that I had read? Or were there notes, music, lined on the pages, as in a hymn book? Her sounds began cascading gently. I knew from listening to a thousand preachers that she was nearing the end of her reading, and I hadn't really heard, heard to understand, a single word. "How do you like that? There's one more thing. Take this book of poems and memorize one for me. Next time you pay me a visit, I want you to recite."

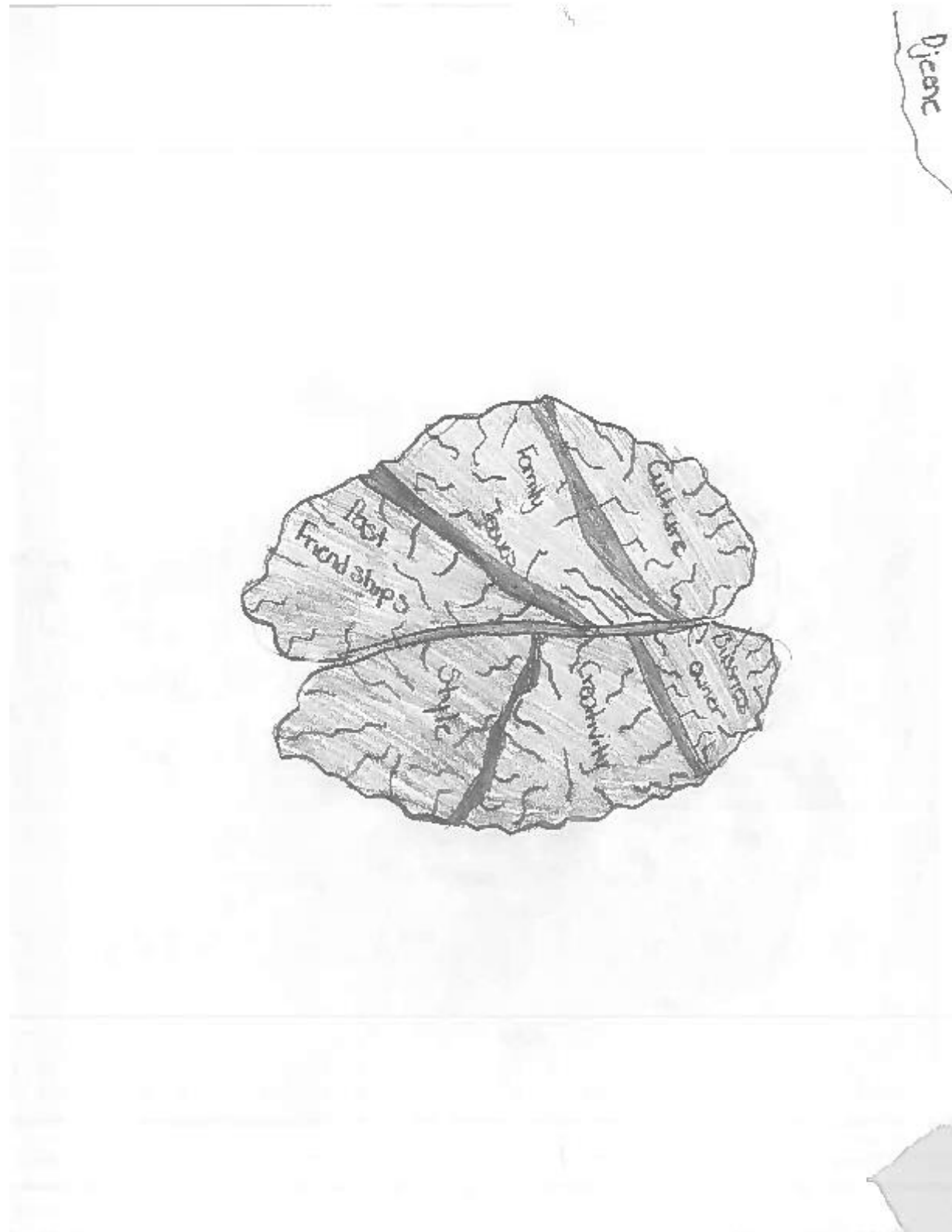
1. Based on the song and excerpt, how did Tupac's mother and Maya Angelou's teacher, Mrs. Flowers, impact their lives?

Tupac's mother, although he did not appreciate her at the time, shaped him into who he was and taught him life lessons. Maya Angelou's teacher was very wise and spoke so fluently and effectively that she got Maya to speak back to her and maybe was one of her inspirations in being a poet.

2. What messages (life lessons, morals, take-aways) are found in "Dear Mama" and the Maya Angelou excerpt?

A message is that even though you may not notice or appreciate something at the time it may grow to teach you everything you know. Another is that speaking is what sets you apart and gives words a deeper level of meaning and expression.

Appendix U: Student Work Artifact



Appendix V: Student Work Artifact

Aaliyah

As a young child, I never really thought about how you ~~the~~ ^{your} tooth can easily be taken from you until I lost one of the age of 9 was when I finally got that wake up call. It was a few days after Christmas, and New Years, and also it was late at night so the whole house was preparing for bed. The house we stayed in was a beautiful brick house with a full front yard, and back with a large wooden back porch. We stayed in that house for six years, until the big fire that started in my room from my old box fan. My mother and I didn't have rolling fans, and the vents were small, but the box fan I had was very old with wires hanging out of it.

I had just took a nice hot shower, and I was very hot so I did what I normally do when I hot, and tug on the fan, and then the unimaginable happened. The fan started to spin, but as it was spinning, it started creating sparks, and multiple landed on my bed. At first I stood there in shock, and ran out the room trying to put the fire out myself. I threw water on it, and some of my burning comforter fell and landed on my foot and arm. The house was burnt almost to ash. I felt like it was my fault one for the fire, and the house getting rebuilt. The life lesson I learned was don't get too comfortable because things can change drastically.

Appendix W: Student Work Artifact

Saniya

The C word

It came when I was little
 and hasn't left yet
 It's beginning to like a riddle
 or a sorely lost bet

You may be wondering
 what is this mystery word
 well the word is cancer
 But I call it a killing word

It starts in to take the people you love
 and forces family to grieve in silence
 It's known for taking people up above
 causing surviving family to react to violence

The C word

A word to remember

The C word

A known life ender

Appendix X: Student Work Artifact



Name/Date: Nyla

Unit 2/Week 1

In the reading, Marjane opposes wearing "the veil." Women in Iran in the late 1970s and 1980s were forced to wear a veil due to the governmental rule of the Shah (king). In the video, activist Kimberly Jones describes the racial inequalities in America and shares her thoughts on the mass riots of 2020.

As we read the excerpt, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that are present in the images and the literature. Also, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that Kimberly Jones displays in the video clip.

<i>Persepolis</i> Reading	Video Clip
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sad • Depressed • Tense • Happy • Angry • Unhappy • Forced • Confused • Scared • Conflicted • Uncertain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustrated • Passionate • Angry • Unhappy • Tired

Appendix Y: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Brygh 10/21/21

Unit 2/Week 1.

In the reading, Marjane opposes wearing "the veil." Women in Iran in the late 1970s and 1980s were forced to wear a veil due to the governmental rule of the Shah (king). In the video, activist Kimberly Jones describes the racial inequalities in America and shares her thoughts on the mass riots of 2020.

As we read the excerpt, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that are present in the images and the literature. Also, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that Kimberly Jones displays in the video clip.

Persepolis Reading	Video Clip
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She didn't like to wear veil. - She was sad to be separated from her friends - the girls on the first page looked confused and forced. - Her mother seemed worried and angry. - Confliction - Desire for change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - She was frustrated - passionate - Angry - desire for change - confliction

Appendix Z: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Elisa Oct 23rd, 2021

Unit 2/Week 1

In the reading, Marjane opposes wearing "the veil." Women in Iran in the late 1970s and 1980s were forced to wear a veil due to the governmental rule of the Shah (king). In the video, activist Kimberly Jones describes the racial inequalities in America and shares her thoughts on the mass riots of 2020.

As we read the excerpt, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that are present in the images and the literature. Also, identify and jot down the emotions and feelings that Kimberly Jones displays in the video clip.

Persepolis Reading	Video Clip
Confused - girls Children were forced to wear veils Self-righteous Terrified & Angry Rising tension from two parties. Anger	Anger Sympathy Hurt Educated Passionate Frustrated

Appendix AA: Student Work Artifact

Rivank

4

Directions: Are there any issues and topics that cause you to feel like Marjane and Kimberly? List the issues/topics that concern you below. These issues/topics can be school related, community based, and/or based in society

There's many times when I walk into a store. It's like you being stalked and hawked like you a criminal. There's was a time in life where things like this didn't bother because that's just how it is when you're black, But when it happens now it definitely bothers me.

- Opportunities for black people
- Black's health care rights
- Jobs accepting blacks and brown people

Appendix BB: Student Work Artifact

Directions: After reading the term below, write any thoughts and/or ideas that come to your mind anywhere on this paper. Also, please write your alias (fake name) beside your comment.

Doing something for the greater good
- Matthias

moving - Gumball

change means bettering yourself for a good cause - Ryan
making a difference - John Stamos

Change means trying to make something right for not just yourself but for everyone! - Ariana

CHANGE

Making things better than they are - Anya

The Four Seasons
- Elisa

Change is making a difference or turning something into something else - Djeene

Make an effect on something - Tyler

Becoming something new, and better for yourself not for others. - Artigan

Appendix CC: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Mathias 11/3/21 P3

Unit 2 Week 2

1. After learning about Malala Yousafzai, is there anything you gathered from her story?

Speaking your opinion may not always
be useful but by sharing these opinions
you can find others who want the same
changes as you. Knowing that others support you
encourages you to make a change.

2. What do you think "change" means for Malala?

To remove and remodel a bad thing
to make it good.

Appendix DD: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Elisa

Unit 2 Week 2

1. After learning about Malala Yousafzai, is there anything you gathered from her story?

I gathered that Malala was only 15 when she was shot and after she never stopped fighting and went from fighting for her life to fighting for other children's life. She is the world's future along with many others.

2. What do you think "change" means for Malala?

I think to Malala change means taking part in a big or small movement and fighting for every person's rights as hard as one can until the people or things they fighting for get justice.

Appendix EE: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Michael FrazierTermsImport- To bring inGenerative- To produce or create.Regenerative To replace.Discourse- Written or spoken communication.Contestation- The act of arguing or disputing.A Goal of Critical Literacy

"When writing is not about preparation for some future outcome, such as a 'good' grade, admission to an elite graduate program, or a well-paying job; rather writing is itself an action of import to the moment; when literacy is life generative and regenerative, sustaining revolutionary discourse through composers with the courage and confidence to contribute commentary and contestation in chaotic times." -Ernest Morrell

1. What does the quote above mean to you?

That someone understands what we feel as learners as we may have
a voice that will be heard and can finally change the
curriculum to benefit our needs

2. Do you think teaching and learning at your school can be adjusted to resemble the meaning of the quote above? OR do you think teaching and learning at your school is fine the way it is? Explain your answer in detail.

Yes. I do think it should be adjusted. The system is
only trying to receive a grade. Most children don't
have a chance to get out of school because they know
that's what all count.

Appendix FF: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Matthias 11/12/21

18

Last week, we discussed the concept of change and analyzed how positive action can create equality and power for disadvantaged groups of people. This week, you were asked to examine your community, school, and neighborhood, and identify anything that stood out to you. Below, list what stood out to you.

Something that stood out to me is the roads leading to my neighborhood entrance and around it. There are no street lights on the roads outside of the neighborhood and the roads are quite thin. This makes everyone very accident prone when navigating these roads at night.

Now, compose and list any questions and/or concerns you may have that connect to the items on the list.

Can these roads be widened? Can streetlights be put up to make it easier to see the road and surroundings at night? Will signs be placed to make people aware to watch their speed?

Appendix GG: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Tyler

Last week, we discussed the concept of change and analyzed how positive action can create equality and power for disadvantaged groups of people. This week, you were asked to examine your community, school, and neighborhood, and identify anything that stood out to you. Below, list what stood out to you.

In my area there are alot of potholes and trash on the side of the roads and you do have to travel a bit to get to healthy food stores.

Now, compose and list any questions and/or concerns you may have that connect to the items on the list.

Some concerns that I have are that it's hard to get real food in my area. there is alot of fast food options near my neighborhood like Wendy's, McDonalds, and Popeys. Another concern I have is the potholes and how they may cause accidents. The amount of times my mom had to swerve around potholes is uncountable and this really needs to be fixed.

Appendix HH: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Elisa

Last week, we discussed the concept of change and analyzed how positive action can create equality and power for disadvantaged groups of people. This week, you were asked to examine your community, school, and neighborhood, and identify anything that stood out to you. Below, list what stood out to you.

The amount of Gas Stations being built.
~~Black owned~~ The black owned store outlet ~~is being built~~

Now, compose and list any questions and/or concerns you may have that connect to the items on the list.

Why is there ~~a~~ constant construction for gas stations when what we need more than anything is a few more grocery stores?
 After the black owned store outlet is opened will there be more around the ~~store~~ and ~~the store~~ areas?
 I'm concerned for the people and environment with constant building of gas stations because people can't just live off of junk food. The trees and grass being chopped down and cut for these lots to build is also very concerning.

Appendix II: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date Elisa

Study Reflection

We have completed the study! Reflect on the readings, discussions, videos, and activities we have engaged in throughout the last eight weeks. Describe your thoughts and perspective on the study and the activities below.

I really enjoyed reading about and watching videos on change, marginal assumptions, and many other things I liked when we talked about change the most. We had the chance to share our thoughts out loud or...on paper and...showing these things although not out loud really helped me develop my opinions on a lot of things. I think this study should be an annual thing for our school and all grade levels and just for a 9th grade lit/comp class. I enjoyed the 7 months we spent on the study.

Appendix JJ: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Antigon 11/16/21

Study Reflection

We have completed the study! Reflect on the readings, discussions, videos, and activities we have engaged in throughout the last eight weeks. Describe your thoughts and perspective on the study and the activities below.

I feel that this study really touched on some really unmentioned topics, and I'm glad I was able to voice my opinion about them. I'm sad that it has to come to an end, but I'm glad that I was apart of this because it was worth it. I feel proud that my opinions was used, and needed. Hopefully my opinions will reach someone who could make the change. I've been waiting/wanting for a long time.

Appendix KK: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Nathan 11/16

Study Reflection

We have completed the study! Reflect on the readings, discussions, videos, and activities we have engaged in throughout the last eight weeks. Describe your thoughts and perspective on the study and the activities below.

I like the topics we've discussed over the past few months and how it encourages us to actually engage in critical thinking. Some of these activities have definitely changed my way of thinking and made me want to speak and share more ideas on how to improve schools and our community as a whole.

Appendix LL: Student Work Artifact

Name/Date: Gumball 11-16**Study Reflection**

We have completed the study! Reflect on the readings, discussions, videos, and activities we have engaged in throughout the last eight weeks. Describe your thoughts and perspective on the study and the activities below.

I believe all the activities that we have done are very useful. The activities have made me think carefully on some of the aspects of our community. My favorite activity was when we had to take pictures of things we see around us. It made me realize that our community needs more attention and thoughts than I realized.

Appendix MM: Student Work ArtifactName/Date: John Stanos**Study Reflection**

We have completed the study! Reflect on the readings, discussions, videos, and activities we have engaged in throughout the last eight weeks. Describe your thoughts and perspective on the study and the activities below.

I believe that the activities have given me the ability to express how I feel about certain situations. These situations that I got to read about and listen to has given me an inspiration to help my community as much as I can. These activities also shown me that there are good people in the world.

